SEE INSIDE FOR OUR THRILLING SERIAL "BRITON OR BOER?"

SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

No. 583. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 3RD, 1900. [ONE PENNY.

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when drinking Cocoa to have the pure article only, as many so-called "Pure" Cocoas contain added matter that is not only unnecessary, but often positively harmful.

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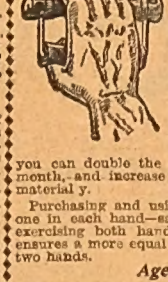

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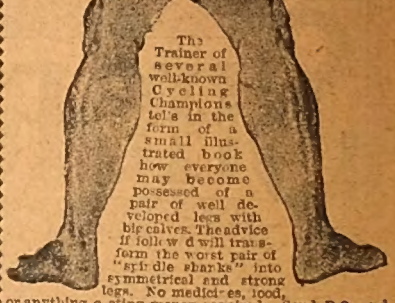

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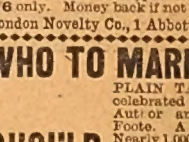

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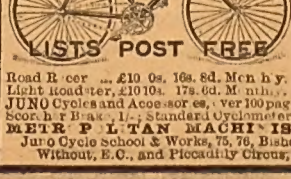

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Short Stories

LOVE WAR ADVENTURE ROMANCE PATHOS HUMOUR

No. 583.] For the Week Ending March 3rd, 1900. [One Penny.

My Strange Night-call.

I had just retired to bed after a hard day's work, fagged and weary, wishing that I were almost anything but what I was—a doctor practising in a densely populated working-class neighbourhood. There the calls were plentiful, but the fees meagre, the said fees having to be collected in small weekly sums by my agent—an arrangement which seriously lessened the sum total of my annual income.

I was then unmarried (though I may say I am now fifty, with sons and daughters in plenty), and therefore had no sympathising ear into which I could pour my troubles.

I was stretching out my weary limbs, when clang went the night bell. Such was the force used on the bell-wire that I was certain that it had broken, and therefore lay still, thinking, however much the knob at the door was manipulated, I should not be disturbed.

In this I was mistaken. A few moments, and I was again disturbed—almost startled—by the savageness of the ring.

I went downstairs, turned up the gas in my surgery, and unbarred the door. It was pushed open impatiently, so impatiently that I was compelled to retreat, or otherwise I should have been bruised.

A lady entered, closing the door behind her.

She was tall, well-dressed, and seemed agitated. I could not clearly discern her features, but I saw through her veil a pair of dark flashing eyes fixed upon me.

Without waiting for me to speak she said:

"You have been long in coming, doctor. But let that pass! I want you to accompany me at once. Are you ready to go?"

I was struck by the voice—it was certainly that of a lady, but so intensely charged with sorrow or anguish, I knew not which, that its tones seemed to curdle my blood, and a shiver ran down my back as though someone had poured ice-cold water there.

Seeing me pause, startled, she hurriedly continued:

"You must come, sir; make your fee as high as you like, it shall be paid. It is a case of life or death! Good heavens, sir, she may be dying now while you stand there hesitating. Quick!"

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Without a word I returned to my bedroom and dressed. I did not like the case. The lady's manner perplexed and not a little terrified me. Yet I felt compelled to obey. Someone was in danger; it was my bounden duty as a doctor to give professional service. These thoughts flashed through my mind as I quickly dressed.

On again reaching the surgery, I noticed the lady's eyes fixed on the door through which I entered. She had evidently never taken them off it since I made my exit.

"I am ready," I said.

"You have got your instruments?"

"No; will they be needed?"

"I—I don't know; better bring them, sir."

I took my case of instruments from the cupboard in which they were kept, and placed them in my overcoat pocket.

"Allow me," I said, but the door was opened before I could reach it, and the lady was standing on the steps.

What a terrible night—or rather morning—it was! Neither moon nor stars were visible.

The lady walked on in front—it was more a trot than a walk; I followed, wishing I had refused to come out at all.

Turning a corner, I suddenly observed a vehicle. It was not a carriage; it was not a hansom; to this day I don't know what to christen that strange conveyance.

It was something on four wheels, with a dark cloth—probably tarpaulin—thrown over it.

I noticed that the horse was black, and the driver was muffled up so that his face would not be recognisable even with better light.

The lady opened the door and bade me to enter. She sprang in, closed the door, and sat down opposite me without a word.

The driver lashed the horse, and away we rattled over the stones.

I was familiar with every street in the district, and nearly every house; I could almost have traversed it blindfold.

But soon the district was left behind. On, on, we went through the heart of the town; on, on, till the wheels of the conveyance no longer rumbled over rough

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stones, but glided almost noiselessly over the country roads.

I became doubly nervous as we rode along. What did it all portend? Where was I being carried? A fear possessed me that all was not as it should be. I was checked in my agitated musings by the sudden stoppage of the vehicle. Where we were I did not know any more than the man in the moon, excepting that we were in the country, and must be miles away from my surgery.

It was a mercy, at least, that we had arrived at the end of our journey, and I should find out the object for which I had been brought so far from home.

The mystery was deepened, however, when, instead of our alighting, the door of the vehicle was opened from the outside, and in stepped two men, closing the door behind them; then the journey was resumed.

A sudden determination possessed me to know what all this mystery meant. I wet my lips with my tongue, for they were dry and hot; then I said, speaking as clearly as I could:

"I have the right to know where I am being conveyed, madam, and why the two men have entered the vehicle without my permission?"

I waited for several seconds, but there was no answer. This made me desperate.

I rose to my feet, and was about to reach the handle of the door that I might open it and get out, when the two men sprang upon me, forced me back into my seat, and in less time than it takes me to write the words I felt my hands tied and my eyes blindfolded.

"Villains," I shouted, "you shall suffer for this indignity. Have you brought me into this lonely place to murder me or what?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Doctor Smith; no harm is intended you. If you do come to harm, it will be your fault, not ours."

It was the lady who spoke.

She spoke calmly; I thought there was a strain of contempt in her voice.

"It is some villainous plot," I exclaimed excitedly, "into which an honourable gentleman of my profession has no right to be dragged."

"You will be asked to do nothing beyond exercising your professional skill, for which you will be handsomely paid," replied the lady.

"You have been long in coming, doctor."

"Why should you drag me so far—why should you pick me out as your instrument? Could you not engage one of my profession nearer to your own home?"

"That is our affair; we chose you."

"But how did you know me—how get my name?"

"We read the letters in the public prints to which your name was attached, and we have formed a high opinion of your skill."

I called myself an idiot for having written to the newspapers. If this was the sort of notoriety I was to get by making my name widely known, better have continued obscure for ever.

Just then the conveyance stopped a second time. I heard the door open, and the two men descended.

I was startled by heavy breathing close to my ear; then the lady whispered—this time I thought with less acridness:

"Dr. Smith, I beg of you not to make any disturbance. So long as you are quiet and do as requested you have nothing to fear—not a hair of your head shall be injured. Refuse, and I dare not answer for the consequences. You are in desperate hands, who will brook no delay or opposition. I again beg of you to ask no questions; do as you are requested, and you will never repent. Remember!"

All this was said rapidly. The lady's mouth was close to my ear; I could feel her hot breath as she spoke. The concluding caution came sharp and clear, and it seemed to me almost tenderly.

Then she left the conveyance, and I heard the command:

"Get up, doctor; give me your hands."

I rose and stretched out my bound hands, which were at once grasped by the hand of some person.

I was led along a gravelly path; my nose informed me by the musty smell pervading the atmosphere that there were bushes and trees near.

Presently (and though the voice of the speaker was not the voice of the lady I had seen, yet I felt convinced it was the voice of a woman) I was told to be careful as there were steps to mount up.

Up we went, until I counted twenty; then I noticed a faint glimmer of light through the handkerchief fastened over my eyes. I heard a door cautiously closed, and I knew I was a prisoner in some house or building, and at the mercy of my gaolers.

I was now led over a stone floor and ushered into a

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carpeted room. Again I heard a door close behind me, and the click of a key turned in the lock. Then the hand that had guided me left my own, and I was standing alone.

I was not left to myself. The bandage was gently loosed from my eyes, my hands were set at liberty.

At first I realised only that I was in a large, magnificently-furnished bed-room, dimly lighted; nor was I left to take in more than a rapid glance. Then the lady who summoned me was once more at my side, and whispered:

"Look round."

At that moment lights were turned up. I looked round. My heart almost ceased beating at what I saw.

Fully twenty masked figures in men's habiliments stood not ten paces from me in a half circle with their right arms stretched out, and grasping in their hands pistols, ready cocked, pointed at my head. Twenty pistols ready to fire at me should I prove refractory.

The lights were suddenly lowered, and only one lamp burned brightly on a round, inlaid table that stood beside a bed.

"You see what you may expect," whispered the lady, "if you refuse to do what you are brought here for. On that bed lies a girl. She has had the misfortune to receive a bullet in her breast. It will be your duty to extract the bullet with as much skill and care as possible. Afterwards you will write out full instructions how to proceed with the wound, answer any questions you may be asked, and, your work being done and your fee paid, you will be conducted back to your home. I need not caution you to keep silent for ever as to this night's work. Should you ever reveal what you have done, or put the police on our track, we have the means of vengeance, and your life will be the forfeit! Come!"

She led me to the bed.

In all my experience up to now, I never beheld so beautiful a creature as the one before me. She lay on her back with her arms thrown over her head, her wealth of golden hair lying on the pillow. I cannot describe her features; it would be folly to attempt it. They were perfect as human features can be.

Her face was pale; indeed, but for the short, quick breathing, in the soft light thrown from the lamp, she might have been taken for some divine piece of statuary chiselled by a master hand.

She bore the operation quietly, patiently, with scarcely a moan. I verily believe I was the greater sufferer of the two.

I had to probe deeply before I discovered the bullet; I felt her lovely form quiver; a slight moan left her lips, nothing more. When I had performed the task, examined the wound, and done what I could, she rewarded me with the sweetest smile that ever illumined the face of fair woman.

Pens, ink, and paper were brought me by the first lady, and I wrote full instructions—indeed by this time I had become deeply interested in my lovely patient—how to treat the wound, and what was to be her diet.

At the foot of the sheet I put these words:

"If any dangerous symptoms appear, do not fail to seek my aid. You are safe with me now and ever.—J.S., M.D."

"You have done your work well, doctor, for which I thank you—nay, I could almost fall on your neck and kiss you. She is my only child, and you may perhaps guess how I love her."

"Madam," I said, "this has been a strange experience for me. I do not know who you are, nor the mode of your life; but I am glad to have rendered a service to that lovely creature whom you call your daughter. One request I should like to make."

"What is it?"

"Let me touch her cheek with my lips!"

The lady paused a moment. I saw her breast heave and swell as her dark eyes flashed upon me through her veil.

"Granted," she said; "but I beg you will do it quickly and unseen by the others present."

I turned to the bed, apparently to see that all was comfortable. I put my ear to her face, as though listening to her breathing. Then, for just one moment, my lips pressed her cheek.

Turning round I saw the veiled lady with the bandage ready for my eyes.

"Is it necessary?" I asked.

"It must be; I dare do no other," she answered.

Then I submitted to be blindfolded once more, but my hands were left free.

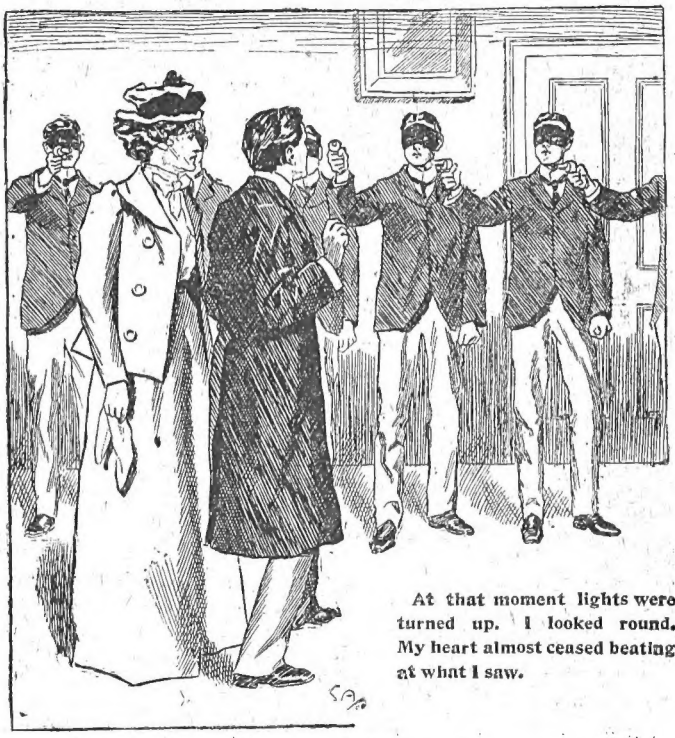
"Here is your fee—a hundred guineas," said the strange lady.

"A hundred guineas!" I exclaimed; "it is too much—ten would have been sufficient."

"You are welcome. Remember, we have bound you by no oath, but not a word to a living soul of what you have seen and done. I should be sorry to be your enemy."

"Madam, I am silent as the grave!"

I need not prolong my story by relating the return journey.



At that moment lights were turned up. I looked round. My heart almost ceased beating at what I saw.

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I was taken back alone in the strange conveyance used to convey me thither.

* * * * *

Everybody old enough will remember the startling discovery made by the police, some fifteen years ago, of a band of female house-breakers.

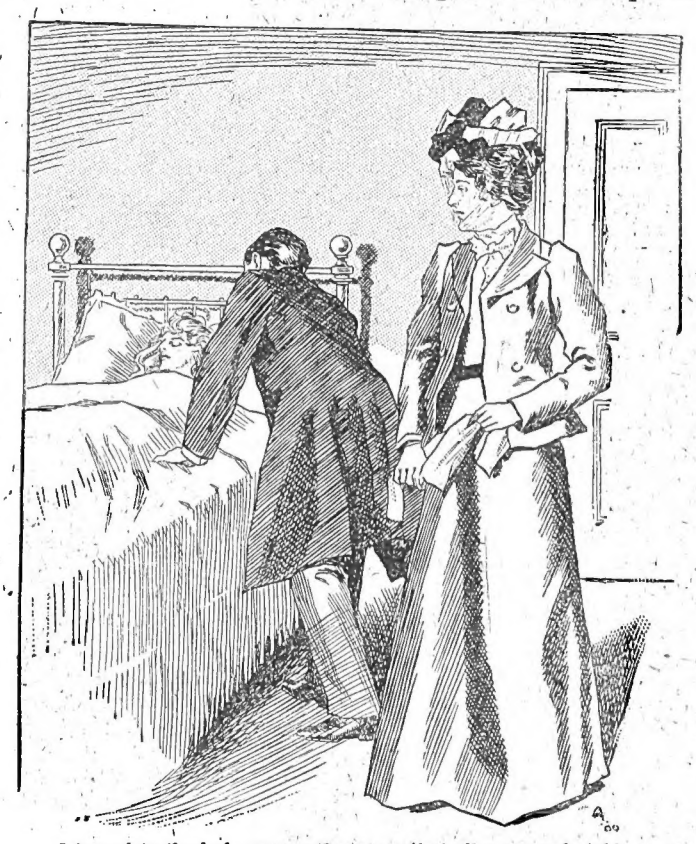
The whole country was roused to intense excitement by the revelations then made.

The newspapers for weeks provided the most thrilling accounts of the depredations the gang had committed, dressed in men's clothing—robbing gentleman's mansions and the better-class houses.

Only three of the gang were captured, an elderly woman and two young ones; the rest escaped, and nothing could persuade those captured to betray their companions in crime.

The elderly woman was said to belong to a Continental family of title, and it was supposed that she was the leader of the gang.

On the day of the trial I went to the court, for strong suspicion had taken possession of me that my strange episode some years back had a connection with the gang of female burglars. The court was crowded, but I managed to secure a position where I could get a good view of the dock.



I turned to the bed, apparently to see that all was comfortable.

When the prisoners were brought into the dock I at once recognised the face of the elder culprit! Casting her eyes round, they fell upon me. By the slight start she gave on seeing me, I knew she recognised me.

She gave a faint smile, put her fingers to her lips and wafted me a kiss.

So artfully was this done that even the lynx-eyed reporters failed to notice the action, and so missed what might have been a very romantic bit of news for the millions who read an account of the trial next day.

She and her two companions were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, and so ended the great female burglar case.

I have often wondered what became of the fair creature whose cheeks I pressed with my lips for the first and last time when she lay so patient, and looking so beautiful, after my operation.

Did she die of her wound? If living, will she read what I have written?

If she reads my narrative, I hope she will pardon my giving to the public what has been locked up in my own breast so many years, the telling of which cannot bring harm to the gang of thieves who practised their unwomanly calling nearly a quarter of a century ago.

F. Derry.

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THE MAD MARE OF EYLAU.

It was in the autumn of 1805, when the officers of the Grand Army were making their preparations and completing their equipages for the battle of Austerlitz. I already had two good horses, but I was searching for a third and better one—a big-hearted charger. The latter was extremely difficult to find, for, prices were very high, and I had little money. But hazard served me marvellously.

I encountered a German scientist, named M. d'Aister, whom I had known when he was a professor at Sorèze. He had become preceptor to the children of a rich Swiss banker, M. Scherer, who was established in Paris, and associated with M. Finguerlin. M. d'Aister apprised me that M. Finguerlin, then very opulent and maintaining a vast establishment, had an extensive stable, one of the leading animals in which was a beautiful mare named Lisette, an excellent beast from Mecklenburg, of attractive appearance, light as a deerhound, and a very surefooted animal. She had but one defect, a terrible one and which was fortunately displayed but rarely. She bit like a bulldog, and threw herself furiously on persons who displeased her. It was on this account that M. Finguerlin had determined to sell her.

I offered a thousand francs, and Lisette became mine, although she had cost M. Finguerlin five thousand. For many months this beast gave me considerable trouble; it required four or five men to saddle her, and the only manner in which her bridle could be put on was by covering her eyes and fastening all four of her legs together. But once one was upon her back, she was found to be an admirable mount.

After she had belonged to me for some time, however, as she had already bitten a number of persons and had not even spared myself, I concluded to get rid of her.

About this time I took into my service a man named Francois Woirland.

He was warned of Lisette's bad character, and, before approaching her, he provided himself with an exceedingly hot leg of mutton, and when the beast threw herself upon him, he thrust the meat at her and she seized it between her teeth. It burnt her gums, her palate, and her tongue, so that she immediately dropped it, and from this moment she was perfectly submissive to Woirland, whom she dared not attack. I employed the same means and obtained a similar result. She thus became easy of approach to myself and my domestic, and even became slightly more tractable for the grooms of the staff, whom she saw every day, but woe to strangers who passed too close to her.

Such was the mare upon which I was mounted at Eylau at the moment when the *débris* of the army corps of Marshal Augereau, crushed by a hailstorm of grapeshot and bullets, were endeavouring to reunite near the big cemetery. You will probably remember that the Fourteenth Regiment of the line occupied a solitary position upon a small hill, which they could not quit except by order from the Emperor.

The snow having ceased to fall momentarily, we could perceive this intrepid regiment, surrounded by the enemy, waving its eagle in the air to show that it still held out, and asking for aid.

The Emperor, touched by the courage and devotion of these fine soldiers, resolved to make an attempt to save them, and ordered Marshal Augereau to send an officer to them.

The latter was to tell them to quit the hill, form a small square, and work their way toward us, while a brigade of Cavalry would march to meet them and second their efforts.

It was before the grand charge made by Murat; it was almost impossible to execute the Emperor's will, because a cloud of Cossacks separated us from the Fourteenth of the line. It became evident that the officer who should be sent towards the unfortunate regiment would be killed or captured before reaching them. However, the Emperor's order was positive, and the Marshal was obliged to conform to it. It was the usage in the Imperial Army for the aides-de-camp to arrange themselves in order at fixed distances from their general, the one at the head attending to the order of the moment, then placing himself at the rear when his mission was fulfilled. Thus each carried the orders in turn, and the dangers were equally divided.

A brave captain of the engineers named Froissard, who, although not an aide-de-camp, was attached to the marshal's staff, found himself at the head of the line, and was charged to carry the order to the Fourteenth. Froissard sped away at a gallop. We lost sight of him in the midst of the Cossacks, and we never saw him again nor learnt what became of him.

The marshal, seeing that the Fourteenth made no movement, sent an officer named David. He met the same fate as Froissard, and we heard no more of him. It is probable that the two men, having been killed and despoiled, were not recognised among the numerous

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corpses with which the field was covered. For the third time the marshal called for the officer on duty. It was my turn!

On seeing the son of his old friend approach, and, I dare add, his favourite aide-de-camp, the good marshal's figure shook and his eyes filled with tears, because he could not dissimulate the fact that he was sending me to an almost certain death. But the Emperor's orders must be obeyed; I was a soldier, and they could not make one of my comrades go in my place, even if I would have suffered such a thing, which would have dishonoured me. But, in making a sacrifice of my life, I considered it my duty to take all possible precautions to save it if possible.

I had remarked that the two officers who had gone before me had carried their sabres in their hands, which led me to believe that they had endeavoured to defend themselves against the Cossacks. This was useless, according to my idea, because it compelled them to arrest their progress to combat against a multitude of enemies, who finished by overwhelming them. I accordingly conducted myself otherwise and, allowing my sabre to remain in the scabbard, I considered myself as a rider who, wishing to win a prize at a race, directs himself as rapidly as possible and by the shortest line towards the desired goal, without occupying himself with what is upon the right or left of his road. Now, my goal being the little hill occupied by the fourteenth of the line, I resolved to proceed thither without paying any attention to the Cossacks.

This method succeeded perfectly. Lisette, lighter than a swallow and rather flying than running, seemed to devour space, leaping over mounds of stones, broken gun-carriages and hardly extinct bivouac fires.

Thousands of Cossacks were scattered over the plain. The first who perceived me acted like hunters in a game-drive, who, seeing a hare rise before them, mutually announced his presence by their cries. But none of these Cossacks tried to stop me, in the first place on account of the extreme rapidity of my flight, and also probably because, being in such great numbers, each of them thought it would be impossible for me to evade his comrades further on. So well did my plan work that I reached the Fourteenth without either myself or my excellent mare having received the least scratch.

I found the Fourteenth formed into a square upon the summit of the hill; but as the slope of the ground was very slight, the enemy's cavalry had been able to execute several charges against the French regiment. These had all been repulsed, and the brave little band was surrounded by so many of the enemy's dead, both men and horses, that they formed a species of rampant which thenceforth rendered the position nearly inaccessible to cavalry.

I transmitted to the officer in command the order to quit his position and endeavour to join the body of the army, he observed to me that the enemy's artillery, which had for over an hour been firing upon the Fourteenth, had caused such losses that the handful of soldiers remaining would be infallibly exterminated if they descended into the plain. Furthermore, he had not time to prepare for the execution of this movement, as a column of Russian infantry was marching upon him, and was then not more than a hundred yards away from us.

"I see no means of saving the regiment," said the chief of the battalion. "Return to the Emperor, give him the farewell of the Fourteenth of the line, which has faithfully executed his orders, and carry to him the eagle which he gave to us, and which we can no longer defend; it would be too painful for us, while dying, to see it fall into the enemy's hands."

The commander then handed over to me the eagle, which the soldiers—glorious remnant of this intrepid regiment—saluted for the last time with cries of "*Vive l'Empereur.*"

The eagles of the infantry were very heavy, and their weight was augmented by a big, strong oaken handle, upon the summit of which they were fixed. The length of this handle embarrassed me considerably, and, as the staff deprived of its eagle could not constitute a trophy for the enemy, I resolved, with the commander's assent, to break it.

But before this could be accomplished the column of Russian infantry, reached the hill, and threw themselves furiously upon the feeble remnant of the unfortunate Fourteenth, the soldiers of which had lived for many days upon potatoes and melted snow. Our brave soldiers defended themselves valiantly with their bayonets, and when the square had been pierced they grouped themselves into various clusters, and sustained for a long time this unequal combat.

During this frightful *mêlée*, many of our men, in order not to be struck down from behind, backed up against the flanks of my mare, who, contrary to her usual habits, remained quiet. If I had been able to move, I would have urged her forward, in order to withdraw with the eagle from the field; but it was absolutely impossible for me to press my legs together so as to make the animal understand my wishes. Not only did they fight all round me, but taking me for the chief of the French, because I alone was on horseback, they made me the object of their special attention, numerous balls constantly whistling past my ears.

Among the French who had backed up against the left flank of my mare was a quartermaster whom I knew, having often seen him in the marshal's tent. This man, attacked and wounded by several grenadiers, fell under Lisette, and seized one of my legs in attempt to raise himself, when a Russian soldier tried to pierce his breast. The grenadier lost his equilibrum, and the point of his bayonet, badly directed, sunk into my mare's thigh. Recalled to her ferocious instincts by the pain, Lisette precipitated herself upon the Russian, and he was soon a mangled corpse.

Then, throwing herself furiously into the midst of the combatants, Lisette, kicking and biting, overturned everything that opposed her passage, and soon carried him out of the struggle to the base of the little hill. Then, taking the road by which she had come, she

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directed her way toward the cemetery of Eylau at a rapid gallop.

Thanks to the hussar's saddle in which I was seated, I was able in all this turmoil to keep my place upon the mare's back, but a new danger awaited me. The snow had begun to fall again, and the big flakes obscured the air. I had gone nearly to Eylau when I found myself in front of a battalion of the old Imperial Guard, who, not being able to distinguish objects at any distance, mistook me for a Russian officer leading a cavalry charge.

Immediately the entire battalion fired upon me. My cloak and my saddle were riddled with balls; but I was not wounded, nor was my mare, who continued her rapid course, traversing the three ranks of the battalion with the same ease that a snake passes through a hedge.

But this last flight had exhausted Lisette's forces. She had lost a quantity of blood, one of the large veins of her thigh, having been severed, and, all at once, the poor beast sank down and rolled to one side, I rolling to the other.

Stretched out upon the snow among the mass of dead and dying, unable to move in any way, I insensibly and painlessly lost consciousness. It seemed as though some one were rocking me softly in a cradle. Finally I swooned completely, and was not even reanimated by eighty squadrons of Murat, going to the charge, passing near me, and perhaps over me.

* * * * *

When I regained my senses after being unconscious for four hours I found myself being carefully tended by my own servant while greatest of joys, the glorious eagle lay safe at my side.

My brave charger was found where she fell. If a reminder of the service she rendered me is needed I have it in the shape of one of her hoofs which lies, mounted, always on my writing table.

Thus ends the story of the Mad Mare of Eylau.

E. Howard.

TOLD IN THE SINGLE MEN'S HUT. (A True Story.)

The single men's hut in Australia is a rough shanty, with bunks arranged round pretty much the same as they are on an ordinary steamer, albeit not so luxurious. Here men herd, and feed, and sleep, and smoke, and yarn after dark. Imagine such a place if you can, and you can easily believe that many yarns of peril and sudden death get told in a place of this description.

"How did you get that big scar on your forehead?" said one of the chums to me.

Naturally I said "Don't bother."

"But tell us, old man, for there's always a yarn attached to a scar, and it's a beastly night. Come! tell us."

"Well," I said, "some years ago I was skylarking, doing some boundary riding, and too often going to a certain roadside inn, to which a pair of lovely blue eyes attracted me a precious sight more than did the drink. At that time I was riding a wild brute of a mare—as wild as they make them. She had been handed over to me because at that time I never cared what I rode, and, in fact, as you know, I don't care much now.

"The night I left the inn was unusually black; but with the kiss of the blue-eyed one still warm on my lips, I swung myself into my saddle, and set the mare going to some tune. She was very rough at first and seemed inclined for a fight, so I sat down for it, and dug in my spurs for all I was worth, and banged it into her well with the handle of my stock whip, and eventually started her, in what I thought, was the right direction.

"She took hold of the bit as if she meant to pull my arms out; but I stuck it, and eventually got on better terms and we went along very well.

"Now begins the story really. I had just loosed myself in the saddle and lit my pipe, thinking only to have a quiet canter home, when the mare slid up on her haunches and made a dead stop. I didn't. Clean over head I must have gone into space. She, with her equine instinct, had discovered the shaft of a disused mine, and down that shaft I went, quite fifty feet, I should think. Why didn't it kill me? Because there was a bed of soft earth at the bottom and upon this I fell, but in falling, I hit my head against some old timber, and half skinned it.

"How long I lay before I came to myself again, I don't know.

"When that event did take place, I was horrified at my situation. Drenched with blood, with barely any-

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thing upon me except matches and about a pint of cold tea in my flask,—I always carry it in preference to grog, although I'm no teetotaler—this was all I had to face the music with.

"The first day I didn't take much notice of it, being too much hurt. On the second, however, I began to explore the old workings, with the result of finding a small pool of particularly filthy water. Still even this was a little godsend in one way. A man can go a long time on water. But now another horror came on—I could not sleep, and of food I had none, and the horrible position in which I was, got on my nerves to such an extent, that, I began to tremble in every limb. Moreover my head was very painful, and I must have been somewhat delirious.

"Daylight found me very weak, not only from my previous exertions and want of sleep, but from hunger. Three nights had passed without my eating, though, up to the present time, I had not felt the want of anything in consequence of being excited by my endeavour to escape. On rising from a mound of earth, which had now been my bed for three nights, I found my knees giving way and shaking from the combined effects of cold and hunger. I felt so weak that it was with difficulty I could crawl across the chamber of the mine with the intention of exploring the workings to see if there were any means of escape through them.

"You will say, 'Why did you not think of this before?' In the first place I had expended all my matches the first night, and then again, feeling that the only way of escape was by the shaft, all my energies had been concentrated in that direction; but now that failed I was induced to seek for some old timber props or slabs out of which I could make a sort of scaffold.

"Entering one of the passages on my hands and knees and groping cautiously along the ground—in case there might be another shaft—I arrived at the end, and finding nothing returned with a weary sigh into the daylight that streamed down the shaft.

"Two more dark arches showed as many passages to be explored, so I at once commenced to crawl into the entrance of one of them. I had hardly advanced a couple of yards when my knees struck against something soft, and at the same time my hand encountered a coil like a snake. With a shriek I scrambled back to the place whence I started, and for a long time could not recover from the effects of the fright. I suppose I fainted, for when I came to myself the daylight was dying away, and the place I was in was deep in gloom.

"That it was a snake I had tumbled against I felt convinced, which had like myself tumbled into this trap; and it was a matter of wonder to me that I had not encountered crowds of these brutes before. Death by the bite of a snake! Was I to come to this after all? Perhaps it would be better than dying from starvation, but the horror of it! I had heard bushmen who had been bitten by snakes describe the sensations experienced after receiving the bite, in which they said that barring the sharp pin-like prick they had no other pain.

"After a time a numbness spread over their limbs and they commenced to feel sleepy, but were kept awake by being violently made to run about, and this action assisted by copious draughts of raw brandy had enabled them to resist the poison. Was not this quietly dropping off to sleep better than the pangs of starvation? Yes! Oh, a thousand times better, and with a prayer to Heaven I crawled into the passage again, and clutched—not the snake, thank Heaven, but my stock-whip, which had, I suppose, bounded into the place when I fell down the shaft. With a cry of delight which echoed through the dreary place, I seized the whip and hugged it to my breast, for I saw in it my deliverer from the horrible tomb. It being too dark to make use of it that night, I again lay down, but with very different feelings from what I had experienced the night before. I was then suffering all the agonies of hunger and thirst combined, which were gradually robbing me of sense and life, now no thought of hunger or thirst troubled me as I again lay down upon the bed of earth.

"I looked for the coming day with an eagerness that prevented my sleeping, and set my brain whirling with excitement. Oh! what would I not have given for a smoke; but I had searched my pockets dozens of times before unsuccessfully, for I was certain I had both pipe and tobacco when I left the public house. Then what had become of them? I racked my brains without receiving any help from them, for everything appeared as having happened at such a distant date, that I could not make up my mind whether I had left the 'pub' four years ago or four days.

"At length the welcome light streamed down the shaft, and, after several trials, I once more rose to my feet. But how shaky my knees had become and how weak I felt. Shall I have strength enough to throw the lash of the whip up the shaft? With tremulous footsteps I crawled along the wall until I got just under the opening, and then gathering the twelve-foot lash into a coil, I essayed to throw it up the shaft. I must have been mad at that time, though of course I fancied I was still in my right senses. And although some years have passed since it occurred, I often in my dreams try to effect the impossible feat of making a twelve foot lash catch in the timbers around the mouth of a shaft fifty feet above my head. How long this extraordinary delusion lasted I have no idea. I must have gradually lost my senses for when I came to myself I was lying in my own bed which I had given up all hopes of ever seeing again.

"It appears that my horse had come back home early on the morning of the sixth day, without saddle or bridle which I suppose he had managed to get rid of when wandering through the bush. His appearance had then alarmed the owner of the station, who, up to that time had thought that I was riding round the boundaries or mobbing up cattle. When the saddleless horse arrived with stains on his coat showing a long want of combing, he had become alarmed, and riding over to the village I had left, was astonished to hear that I had been gone for six days. Calling for volunteers, and taking dogs with them, they had tracked me to the shaft down which I had fallen as was shown by the horse's footmarks where he had slid forward in trying to stop. How to get down to see if I was there was the question, for though they shouted again and again, no answer was returned, as by that time I was insensible. Taking off their bridles, the reins were soon made into a rope, and one of their number was lowered down. He found me, and called out to his friends that I was dead. However, fastening the reins around me, the men on the surface soon had me on the grass, when perceiving that just a glimmer of life remained, they cut down a few saplings and extemporized a stretcher to carry me home.

"It was a long time before I came round, but thanks to the kind and gentle nursing of the Owner's wife, I did at length recover; but never as long as I live shall I forget the horror of those days passed in the old mine.

"That's all, mates, about the scar on my forehead."

C. M. R.

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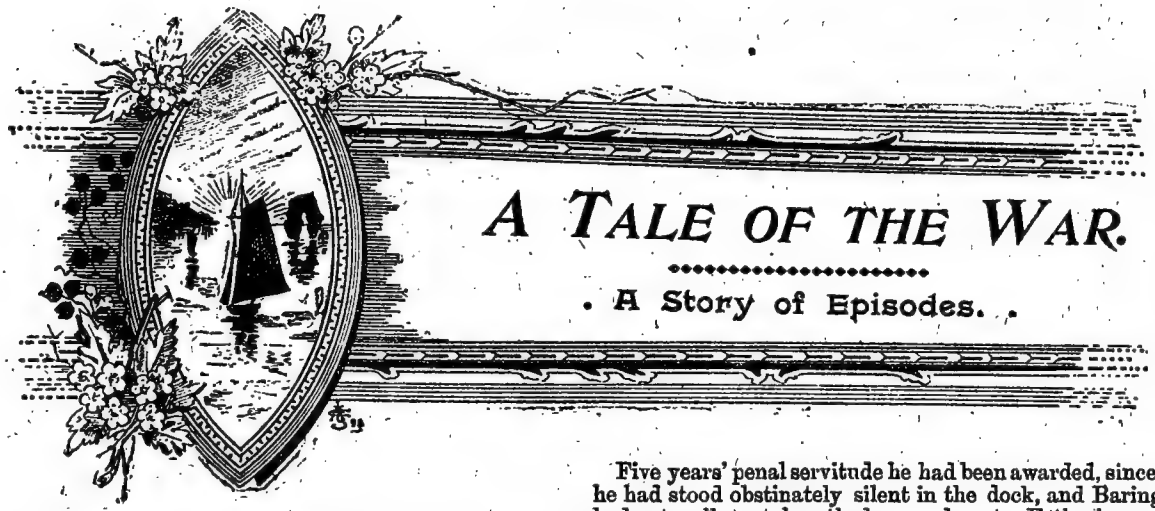


A TALE OF THE WAR.

A Story of Episodes.

IT was very wet weather, and the exterior of the prison at Bolter's Sands seemed more dreary than the interior, so that James Fosdyke shivered as he stepped across the threshold into fresh air and freedom. His alert face was not that of a criminal, though the lines were branded and deepened on it, as though they had been seared by a hot iron. He was a man of middle height, spare and lean, with the shapely hands of a skilled mechanic, and eyes that could gauge the length and quality of a plank of oak for the carving.

Five years before, he had been a cabinet-maker in the small town of Westfield, with a prosperous business, and an only sister who kept his house for him, until the day that pretty Esther Davey should come to it as his wife. He had worked hard to make his home charming in every way with deft contrivings that should constitute her the most envied woman in the street. Every night, after working hours, he had laboured at the pretty suite of furniture that was to adorn her room, until chair and table had at last satisfied his critical fancy.

He remembered that time hungrily now as he stood staring with wide eyes at the long road that lay before him, ending in London and the crowd which would swallow him up. How pretty Esther Davey was—with her flower-like face and fair hair, so child-like and appealing, so fresh and gay! Poor love—poor little Esther—he had seen the crown of fair hair low in the dust before him—the blameless coronal of a girl's fame smirched and soiled.

Another memory darted into being with a flash of vigour that was like a stab—the memory of Roland Baring, the son of the rich banker of Westfield, the threads of whose life had become inextricably mingled with Essie's—to his detriment and her shame. He clenched his fists now as he remembered the smooth, handsome face of the young soldier, home on leave, and idly ready for any adventure that offered itself.

When the whole sad story had come out, he, James Fosdyke, had gone to Baring's home, had sought an interview with him, and in white fury had struck him in the face. The blow had lodged on the temple, and for many days the young man lay hovering between life and death, till the balance of the scale shifted, and he came back to existence again—to help to put Fosdyke in gaol for attempted murder.

Five years' penal servitude he had been awarded, since he had stood obstinately silent in the dock, and Baring had naturally not breathed a word as to Esther's connection with the case. It had therefore appeared to the jury that some trivial quarrel between the two men had ended in a horrible revenge, and Fosdyke was convicted without the aid of any extenuating circumstances. The satisfaction that he had saved Esther's good name in the eyes of the world was marred for him by the look of returning health in the face of Mr. Baring, whose satisfaction at the verdict was not good to see.

And thus it was, that at the age of nine and twenty, James Fosdyke stood without hope or friends, outside the prison walls. His sister Rose had died of the shame, his house and business were no more, so that there seemed no particular reason why he should return to Westfield; but, rather, as his inclination led him, begin life in a fresh place with new sphere of work.

The red of the setting sun was upon the wide plain of Bolter's Sands, far away he could see the November haze upon the dull sea, closing in a dead foggy night for any ships coming up Channel.

"I will be even with him before I die," he said, lifting his hand to Heaven with a passion that lifted him out of everyday life and set him on a pinnacle of tragedy. "Three lives has he spoilt for his own pleasure. I will be even with him."

Like Shylock, he might have said, "I have an oath in Heaven," but, unlike Shylock, it seemed to him that. Heaven should have no part in a compact that was unholy.

Then, pulling up the collar of his coat, he set out up the London Road, to be lost in the mist and the darkness.

* * * * *

A doss house in the East-end of London is no charming abode, but it was to one, in the particularly insalubrious street that went by the name of Parker's Rents, in the Whitechapel district, that James Fosdyke had drifted by the next autumn. His want of success had been from no special fault on his part, but rather that misfortune seemed to dog his footsteps whenever he set his hand to any special work. He had become disheartened, feeling that the prison taint upon him had branded a seal upon his forehead, setting him, like Cain, apart from other men. Over the kitchen fire, a group of tramps were busy cooking their supper of some

savoury mess, that smelt hotly of fat and garlic, while half a dozen others, who had not the price of a meal about them, watched the frizzling pan, like unclean birds of prey.

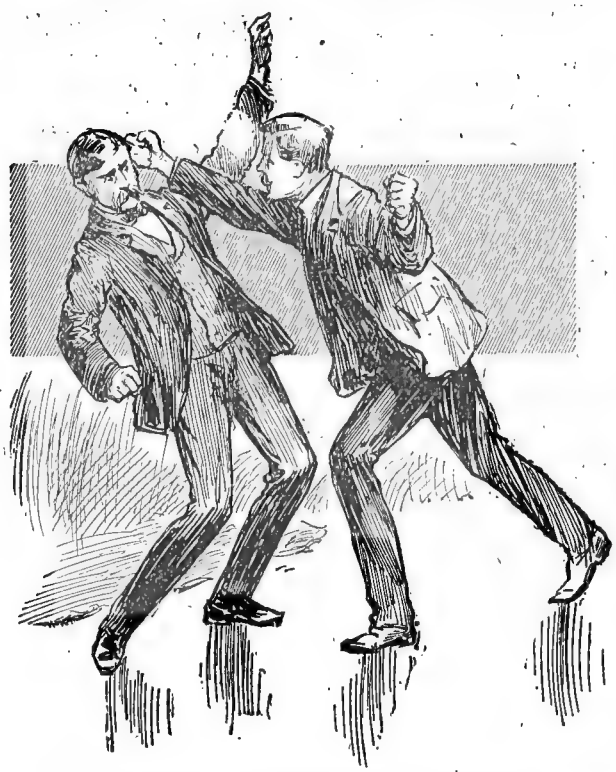
In a corner, shaded from the flaring naphtha lamp, sat two men of a better class, James Fosdyke and an acquaintance, who, by force of circumstances, had drifted into friendship. Of the same height and colouring, they seemed to bear a resemblance to one another, that ceased with one glance at the disease-wasted features of Fosdyke's friend, and the firmer, healthier face of the mechanic himself. They were very silent in the horrid din and clamour of the place where profanity and foul language were the sign manual of the *habitué*, and when Fosdyke's friend spoke at last, it was with the weary accent of a man who has long ago accounted hope as one of the lost possessions that time could never restore to him.

"No supper, Jem? I'm thinking it'll not be on account of appetite this time."

"I'm not broke," said Fosdyke. "I've five shillings, but when that's done, it's a case of the Thames or priggin'."

"It's a case of a coffin with me, anyway, whether work'us or doss'ouse. You'd never have thought I was a soldier once, eh, Jem? They're callin' out the Reserves of the old regiment, too, to-morrow, but it'll not be Ned Thomas as'll answer his name in Fleetwood Barracks when the reservists of the Dublin Fusiliers come shufflin' in."

"No, I reckon you're booked for another journey by another transport," returned Fosdyke, not unkindly.



In white fury James Forsdyke had struck him in the face.

"Jem," the voice was hoarse and excited, "I've one thing to leave, as I care about more'n the world—a sister. She wasn't right in her back from the first—queer and half-growed——" and he paused with a cough that shook him cruelly.

"What is the good of tellin' me, Ned? Do I look like a chap as can put my hand in my pocket and set your sister in a mansion?"

"No—but Jem—you've five shillings, and I've—just my papers—and Molly might set 'erself up as a flower girl, or a match hawker, with the money."

"What do you mean?"

"There's no call for you to be fierce about it. You and I passed the honest stage long ago, Jem. What use is my papers and things to me, dyin' of the decline, but to you they'd be new life—new hopes—and Molly'd be glad of the five shillin's."

"If I was caught?" said Fosdyke, breathing hard.

The other leant his lean arms on the table, and looked into his chum's face with deathly earnestness.

"You'd never be—none of the old regiment has seen me for years—since I left—and you're the same height, Jem, and the same build as me."

"Heavens! To begin life again—to have another chance!"

The groan came from the man's soul, and his agony surprised the other, looking at him curiously. One of the tramps swore furiously as a new-comer, blind drunk, lurching in, nearly upsetting the tripe in the pan.

"I'll do it and thank you."

Fosdyke rose and clutched at the dirty papers held out to him.

"Tell Molly—you saved a soul alive—and—for heaven's sake, old chap, go into the 'ouse to die—it's better than the streets."

He took off his waistcoat with a quick gesture—it would sell for something—and laid a little canvas bag on the table, from which he took two half-crowns, a pair of gold sleeve-links, and a battered silver locket, from which he first abstracted a curl of yellow hair.

"They're all yours," he said, "for Molly. I've no use for 'em now, and they'll maybe make dying a bit easier for you." Leaning over his friend, he took his hand in a tight grip. "Good-bye," he said, "good-bye."

"S'long," said the other, with a feeble attempt at a laugh. "When I was scene-shiftin' for the Christmas pantomime, they used to say: 'Exit James Fosdyke—hey, presto, Ned Thomas appears.'

"Aye—exit James Fosdyke—it'll be a bed over my head and a ration in my mouth anyway, and I once got as 'igh as a corporal in our Volunteer corps, so I knows the trick of the thing. Good-bye."

And the new Reserve man was gone, while the old one sat looking at his newly acquired wealth, till the tears welled up slowly into his aching eyes, and, rising, he limped away up the street to Molly's attic.

* * * * *

Life on a troopship for three weeks at a stretch has its disadvantages, but to private "Ned Thomas" every hardship was a luxury, every privation a blessing. He had fallen into his place in the ranks without the slightest difficulty, and now that the Dublins were forging their way up country from Durban to intercept the Boers at Estcourt, he had become so much at ease with his position and duties, that his life might

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have been spent in soldiering. When questioned as to his means of livelihood since he joined the Reserves, he always replied that he had been down on his luck, and as so many of his companions appeared to have suffered from the same complaint, his statements passed unchallenged.

They were within sight of the Boer laager before he had had leisure to think and wonder over the chance that had brought him here, and it was the random firing from an enemy's reconnoitring party that made him first realise the sternness of the situation. War was such a light word in peaceful England, bandied from lip to lip, that he had never paused to remember that it meant hard work, horrible sights, and all the danger and excitement attendant on hard fighting.

He had no fear for himself, only wonder as to what the day might bring forth. He sat by the tent door that evening, thinking, with his hands folded across his knees, waiting for "Reveille" to sound. The long day died away across the plain, tinging the peaks of the mountains and the spurs of rock ridges with fire.

There was another regiment lying a little further off, and he could see the twinkle of their lights, and hear the subdued clatter of voices. He remembered that moment next day, when they were in the thick of the fight, and Boer and Englishman had met in a deadly *melée*, from whence there was no escape. He fought like a madman, feeling that in action lay escape from thought, and the only way of atoning for what was at best a fraud.

The sun waned to its setting upon the fierce fight. He had flung himself upon bearded Boer and bronzed Free-Stater, and where quarters were too close for the work that the Martini did so well, fought with stock and barrel as best he might.

The private lifted the officer in strong arms that cradled him like a child, and began hurrying back to the camp.

Just at sundown, when the day was almost over, from the other camp away across the veld that had kept the left flank of the enemy engaged, emerged a horse and its rider. The horse—a bright bay—was fretting at its bit, but at the touch of the spur, he sprang forward with a bound. No doubt he was the bearer of some message from the regiment that lay under the spur of the hill, and each man of the "Dublins" held his breath at the sight of the dancing horse and rider, who had to cross the enemy's very line of fire. There was not much doubt as to the outcome of so forlorn a hope, for a shower of Mauser bullets brought the bright bay to the ground in horrible quivering, death agony, and his rider beneath him, where he lay motionless.

One glance Private Ned Thomas cast at the fighting, struggling mass of men, and one at the inert black mass of horse and rider on the sun-scorched grass. There was the quiver of a muscle, the faint movement of hand or foot, and without a thought he darted away towards the open, with the wild, mad thought of saving a life that had been brave to recklessness.

He bore a charmed life, for the bullets fell round

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him like hail, touching no part of him or his uniform, but it was with a feeling of awful wonder that he fell upon his knees by the side of the wounded man, and drew him away from the heavy body of his charger, that gripped him like a vice.

He was not dead, for his eyes opened as the Private wiped the blood from his face.

"You're a bit knocked out of time, sir. Good Heavens!"

The cheery tone in which Thomas had begun to speak died away with a hoarse groan, as he realised that he had risked his life for the man who was the worst enemy the world had held for him!

"So it's you, is it?" he said again, fiercely, passionately. "This is the day as I've prayed for night and morning for six years, and it's come at last, you false, sneaking hound, you with your lying, cheating ways, and your eyes, as looked away a pure innocent soul, whiter now than yours'll ever be. You've come to your last moment, and I'm only waiting to decide whether to leave you here and go back, and say as you were dead, or wipe out your life with a blow from the stock of my carbine."

The deathly lips moved, while the eyes, in haunting, hopeless terror held him.

"I'm shot—in the back—can't move—Fosdyke—surely the bitterness of death is past."

"Even the Devil can quote Scripture. There's Esther a-standin' between us."

The battered carbine was raised with a steady aim, and if ever murder looked out of any man, it did at that moment out of Fosdyke's blood-shot, strained eyeballs, and the man below him flinched as he had never done, even at Elandslaagte.

"For Esther's sake—Fosdyke! I will marry her—when I get back."

The hand faltered, and the carbine dropped with a thud.

"Do you swear it?"

"I swear it by the Cross," clamoured the broken, wounded voice.

Steady as a rock the private of the "Dublins" rose and lifted the officer to his knees, then to his breast, in strong arms that cradled him like a child, and began hurrying back with his burden to the shelter of the friendly camp, from which a dozen eager men were running with offers of help. The first of them caught Captain Baring from the staggering, bleeding figure of the man who had braved a whole line of Boer bullets.

"You've earned the Victoria Cross, lad," he said, "and you'll get it too."

But Private "Ned Thomas" of the "Dublins" fell upon his face at the man's feet, without an answer, and they said afterwards that he must have been hit mortally just as he rose to carry Captain Baring back to camp, and that for the last few yards of the race he had been practically a dead man!

Prison and starvation flung behind him, he had won fame and honour in the moment of his dying, and had lost them in the winning, to find them again on the other side.

Roland Baring did not marry Esther Davey, for she was dead before he was able to return to his native country.

But if any man says that the life of James Fosdyke was thrown away, he may have the satisfaction of knowing that I can give him the lie direct.

A. E. C. Weigall.

£250 * *

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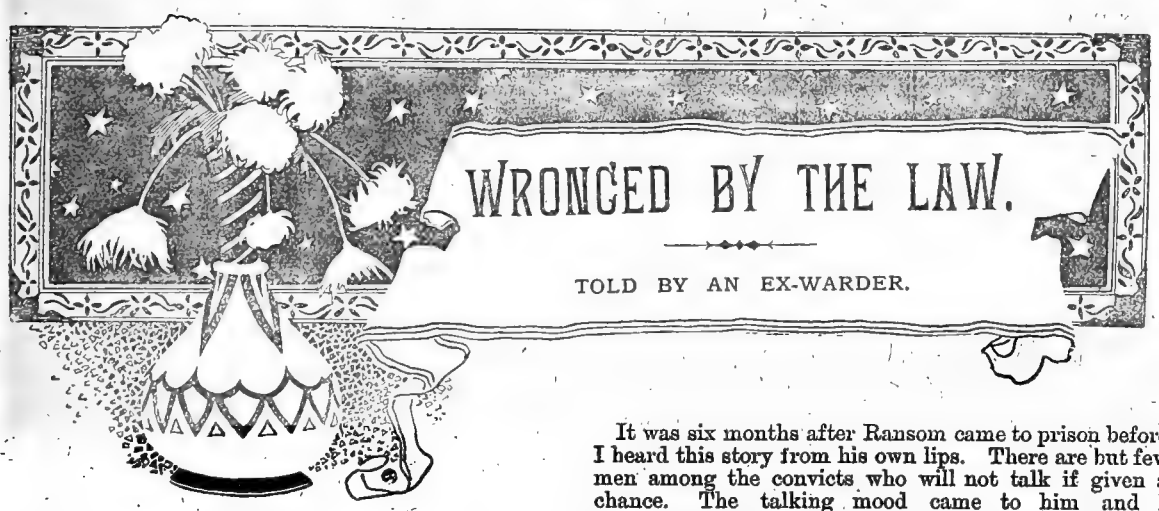

WRONGED BY THE LAW.

TOLD BY AN EX-WARDER.

Now and then you read of the case of a man, executed or sent to prison on circumstantial evidence, who turns out to have been wronged by the law, and we all know that certain men, if drafted into the jury box, will refuse to convict on such evidence.

One need not be greatly troubled with doubts and fears, however. Convictions which wrong the innocent are very few, and circumstantial evidence who turns out that can be adduced. While it rarely brings harm to an honest man, it can weave such a web around a guilty one that there is hardly a chance of escape.

Twice in my life I have had to do with criminals convicted on circumstantial evidence, and that they were not guilty of the crime attributed to them and were unjustly convicted and sentenced was in a measure their own fault.

There came to us, when I was assistant warden in one of our convict prisons, a man named Ransom, who had been a merchant and a prominent citizen in the town of Colwell.

He was about forty years old, well educated and gentle in his manners, and after a time he was made book-keeper in the office.

He had been tried and convicted of setting fire to his shop for the sake of the insurance money. That was not the worst of it; a clerk in his employ who slept on the premises had been presumably burnt alive, and Ransom received a sentence of fifteen years.

At the trial it was proved that he was hard up financially; that his stock was over-insured; that creditors were pressing him; that he left the shop at nine o'clock one evening and flames broke out soon after.

For a couple of hours he could not be found, and when he did appear he was greatly agitated and upset.

The prisoner made what was called a good defence, but the lame point in it was that he could not account for his time between nine and e even o'clock of that evening.

He first claimed to be at home, and when this was shown to be false, he told other untruths.

He, of course, claimed that the fire was an accident, and had he told the truth, and the whole truth, about his movements, it is doubtful if he could have been convicted. A bit of good detective work would have put a different face on the matter at the outset.

It was six months after Ransom came to prison before I heard this story from his own lips. There are but few men among the convicts who will not talk if given a chance. The talking mood came to him and I encouraged him to go ahead and make a clean breast of it.

He might not have told me all had he not heard that day that his wife had renounced him and gone back to her parents, thus breaking him all up and making him feel that he must tell his story to somebody to relieve his over-burdened mind.

He told me everything and concealed nothing, and when he had finished I was satisfied that he had told the truth and was a wronged man.

He had a brother who was quite well to do, and who strongly believed in his innocence, and in the course of a fortnight we had a detective at work.

I said that a clerk had been presumably burnt with the premises. This was looked upon by nearly every one as a fact, and it entered into the case greatly to the man's prejudice and that without even a search of the ruins for the bones of the victim.

The young man had gone to his room over the shop at eight o'clock, and he was not seen after the fire.

Owing to there being a lot of barrels of oil in the cellar it had been a fierce fire, and there had been an explosion that had shaken the walls down. The clerk's bones were no doubt under the heap of debris, but they had not been found and identified.

That was a queer thing, you will say, and so it was, but the prosecution would take no steps as the real charge was arson, and so it was left to be assumed that the clerk perished in the flames.

"Did he or did he not?" was the first question to be solved by the detective.

Every shovel of debris was taken from the cellar after a week's hard work, but no bones were found. If the young man was burnt some evidence ought to exist. He was known to have a revolver in his room, and to carry a silver handled pocket knife. Neither of these were found. He likewise had half a dozen rare old coins, but not one was found in the ruins.

His best suit of clothes had metal buttons, but not a button of the sort was discovered. In a week the detective was satisfied that the clerk was not burnt with the shop. If alive where had he gone to, and why did he go away at all?

There was another clerk who had not gone, and after a vigorous pumping he was led to say that he believed his fellow clerk had been guilty of stealing and had run away. In the next ten days he was found at his uncle's house two hundred miles away, and two hours after he was

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found, he owned up that he had embezzled about £150 in less than three months, and had fled because he knew the merchant was overhauling his accounts. He left the shop about nine o'clock that night, and knew that Ransom was below.

As to the fire, he had not heard of it, but remembered that he had left a candle burning in his room.

When the detective returned to Colwell and talked with those who first discovered the fire, he found they were agreed that the flames worked downward instead of upward, proving that the fire started from above.

Where had Ransom put in the time from nine to eleven o'clock? He had already told me. He had visited the house of a woman in the outskirts with whom he was infatuated, but nothing would make him admit it to disgrace his wife and children.

He believed that he set the shop on fire by accident, and when arrested he wanted to conceal so much that the case looked clear against him. Inside of three months from the time we began work he was at liberty, but he was financially ruined, broken in spirits and wandered off west to die in the course of two or three years.

A straight story from him at the outset, corroborated by the woman, would have resulted in his discharge, as the over insurance was shown to have been the result of a misunderstanding with the agent. In seeking to avoid a village scandal Ransom had dishonoured himself and family, and suffered imprisonment.

Another case of being wronged by the law, which I also discovered, was that of a female convict sentenced for life for the murder of her husband by poisoning. This was altogether a case of circumstantial evidence. She was the wife of a farmer, and although they had lived together for fifteen years they had always quarrelled and jangled. On a certain occasion she had been heard to wish him dead; she had inquired about poison; she had wished herself dead.

One day the woman was bitten by a neighbour's dog. She made threats of what she would do, and a bitter quarrel was the result. A week later she called at the village chemist shop and complained that her house was infested with rats and bought a quantity of strychnine.

A few days later there was another quarrel and she left the house. On the highway she met a neighbour and told her all the details and added that she had "fixed" her husband so that there would never be another quarrel. Two days after that he was found dead in the house, and a post-mortem proved that he had been poisoned by strychnine. Suspicion fell upon the wife, of course, and when her trial came on her lawyer made but a poor defence. It was a plain, straight case, and the jury were not over half-an-hour in bringing in a verdict of guilty.

Mrs. Sherman, as the woman was named, had been in prison a year or more before she told her story to the matron. Each and every prisoner has a story to tell, and that story always makes the teller innocent of crime, but one learns to sift out and retain the truths if there are any.

The woman seemed to have awakened from a trance and to realise for the first time where she was. While she admitted buying the poison, she declared it was for the dog, and that he had really been put out of the way. What she meant by "fixing" her husband was that she knew he stole a lot of wheat from a neighbour and could be sent to prison for it. He had the poison in his possession, knew what she bought it for and placed it in the meat thrown to the dog. How he came to take it was more than she could tell, unless with the intent to commit suicide. She had been gone two days when he was found dead, and the doctors agreed that he had not been dead more than twelve hours when the body was discovered.

There was a point there for her but it was not worked out. She gave me many other points not related above, and as a result I set a detective to work on my own account.

The first thing he had found was that the dog had been poisoned at the time she stated. The next was that about thirty bushels of wheat had been stolen at the date she gave and that her husband rested under suspicion as the thief.

The wife left home on a Wednesday morning. The detective soon hunted up several people who had seen her husband about the place even up to nine o'clock on Thursday morning.

Not one of these people had been called at the trial. If they had been the prosecution might have claimed that the poison was so placed that the man did not get hold of it until next day. The detective therefore went further.

It took him two weeks to do it, but he hunted down a tramp who had called at the farmhouse about ten o'clock on Thursday morning.

The tramp found the farmer alone and suffering, and from his incoherent talk understood that he had determined to take his own life and had already swallowed poison.

There was an empty glass and a paper which had contained the strychnine, and the tramp was beseeched to "hurry on and tell Mary" that she might see him before he died.

Instead of thus concerning himself the fellow helped himself to some provisions and clothing, and he had on a coat belonging to the dead man when overhauled by the detective.

While I was soon satisfied of her innocence, and brought several others round to my way of thinking, it took six months to get the case re-opened, and even then it was ridiculed by the Press and public.

The solicitor who had taken the woman's case through the court and not even raised a doubt in her favour, called to tell me that all the lawyers in the county could not even get a disagreement of the jury if the case was reopened, but we, nevertheless, went ahead with it.

In two days her character was cleared and she stood a free and innocent woman, but yet only half the public were satisfied, and to this day there are scores of people who believe that she was guilty and ought to have ended her days in prison.

She went to a far-off town, but her name as "The Borgia" followed her there and prevented her from making a living, and a year later came the news of her suicide by jumping overboard from a steamer.

M. Q.

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A DROP OF WATER.

THE foremost of the Arabs stumbled suddenly, and pitched heavily forward upon the sand. His companion, who had been following closely in his footsteps, stopped, hesitated, looked abstractedly across the flat expanse of desert, and then began feverishly to unfasten the leather water bottle from the girdle of the prostrate man. He held it up, shook it slightly and listened. There was not a sound. Cautiously he tipped the bottle more and more, until it was completely inverted; but not a drop of the precious liquid greeted his red, restless eyes.

He put his hand to his breast and drew forth a similar bottle from the folds of his long, flowing robe. Yes! Thanks be to Allah! there were still a few mouthfuls left; and a rasping laugh came from his blistered throat as he shook the bottle and listened to the life-giving gurgle within. Then he raised it to his lips. An instant later and it was snatched violently from his hands, several drops of its precious contents splashing out upon the thirsty sand, where it was immediately swallowed up.

With a cry more nearly like that of a despairing animal than a human sound, he sprang upon his companion, bearing him heavily backward to the ground and in the shock of the fall the bottle slipped from the other's hand and rolled some distance away, where it lay wavering and distorted by the intense heat.

Both saw what had happened; and filled simultaneously with a nameless dread that it might be lost to both of them, lay still for a brief second and watched it.

Then the struggle began again. Over and over the brown figures rolled, the hot sand burning like fire wherever it came in contact with the naked skin, and their breath coming in quick gasps from between their cracked and swollen lips.

The intense physical strain was plainly telling upon their strength, and seemingly urged by a common impulse they paused a moment, each retaining his hold upon the other's body.

The wind shifted the finely powdered sand and drove it persistently into eyes and open mouths. The heat became unendurable; better to die fighting than to die slowly roasted to death by the blistering sun, and that with water almost within their reach.

Again in the blind fury of their struggles the distance was slowly widening between them and the half-emptied bottle, so that when in another minute or so, they paused again, it lay several yards away, and was already beginning to parch and crack in the frightful heat that poured down upon it. A harsh rattling sound broke the fascinating stillness.

The legs of one of the Arabs jerked convulsively once or twice, the muscles of his neck twitched slightly, any slowly rolling over upon his back, he shuddered and la still.

The other man struggled painfully to his knees. He looked wonderingly at the dead form beside him for an instant, and then burst into a hoarse peal of laughter that jarred appallingly upon the solitude of the place and hushed him instantly.

In the mad terror of delirium that now settled down upon him he began slowly making his way across the waste of sand that separated him from water and a few more hours of life.

It was a last supreme effort to shake off the already tightening grasp upon his throat. His eyes were red and bloodshot, and from between the tightly drawn lips his dust-laden tongue lolled horribly.

Once he looked back, but what he saw there only urged him to fiercer effort, and with almost superhuman endurance he dragged himself inch by inch towards the goal.

A few seconds, that seemed an eternity to him, and the fearful struggle was at an end. In a frenzy of delight he seized and raised the bottle to his smarting lips, only to fling it away again, for even in that short time the fierce heat had done its work; and through the half-opened seams, drop by drop, the water had leaked out and vanished deep into the hot sands.

The grasp on his throat tightened; he tried to cry out, but his swollen tongue seemed to be choking him, and no sound came from between his lips.

The delirium gained headway fast, and he began to dig furiously in the loose sand where the bottle had lain as if he would follow and overtake the priceless fluid before it was lost to him for ever.

Gradually the flesh was wore away from the finger tips, leaving the bone exposed; but he seemed to take no notice, and only dug the more desperately, on and on, until at last the overtaxed brain gave way, and, like a mortally wounded animal, he collapsed suddenly, and pitched limply forward upon the sand. A puff of hot, suffocating air blew some sand over him. More and more sifted into his nostrils and trickled down into his blackened throat.

A beautifully mottled lizard paused an instant, eyed distrustfully the strange object in its path, and then darted swiftly away, scattering the sand at every step. And over all, a vast presence from the world beyond, hung the appalling stillness of the great desert.

W. R. T.

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Briton or Boer?

By GEORGE GRIFFITH.

For years past Britain and the Transvaal have been spoiling for a fight, and it was left to that well-known author, Mr. George Griffith, to write a strong and exciting serial nearly **four years ago** graphically describing a huge war between the two countries.

This story, coming so **soon after the Jameson Raid,** was read with unusual interest.

Now that Briton and Boer are in deadly conflict it will be interesting to read the story, and see how far the imagination of the author has actually come true.

SUMMARY OF OPENING CHAPTERS.

Chapter I.—The scene op us on the Rand. It is the eve of Amajuba day and a State ball is being given. To this comes Prince Paul Regna, a Polish nobleman, and his daughter, Princess Vavara. They are introduced to Dr. Leyds.

Chapter II.—Dr. Leyds returns to Pretoria to attend a midnight consultation at the Government buildings. The Prince's rooms are in the Grand Hotel opposite. By tapping the wires, which cross the street at this point, the Prince and his daughter overhear all that goes on, and telegraph the result by secret code to Europe.

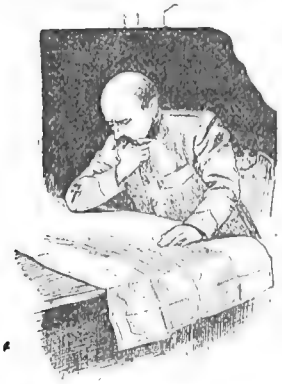
Chapters III. and IV.—Amajuba day dawns. The Secretary accompanies the Prince and Princess to Krugersdorp, where, from the base of the Monument of Independence, the President makes a great proclamation. The Convention of London is abrogated, the absolute independence of the South African Republic is declared; the President unfurls a Union Jack and rends it to pieces. So the storm bursts!

CHAPTER V.

Bad News at Buluwayo.

"We can't get through to Palapye or Tuli, General, and a wire has just arrived from Sir Richard Martin at Salisbury to say that no replies have been received from Chimoyio for forty-eight hours."

Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington, Commander-in-Chief of the Imperial, Colonial, and irregular troops in Rhodesia, received the piece of intelligence, at once startling and puzzling, from the lips of Captain Scott-Turner, his adjutant, while holding a sort of informal council of war in his headquarters in Buluwayo on the evening of the eventful sixteenth of December, 1896.



Lord Grey, administrator of the Chartered Company; Major Watts, chief staff officer; and Colonel Plumer, commanding the irregular troops which had been enlisted at Mafeking in the early part of the year, looked up simultaneously from the maps and papers which lay on the table before them with undisguised astonishment and some little concern depicted on their faces.

"What the deuce can that mean?" said Sir Frederick, after a brief pause, tapping the table gently with his finger-nails. Palapye, Tuli, Chimoyio! Why, that means that Rhodesia is no longer in telegraphic communication with the rest of the world.

"Captain Turner, see at once how far the lines are clear in both directions. Tell Captain Murray to have his troop ready to start in an hour's time for Mangwe. He must make his transport as light as possible and go as quickly as he can; but every man must take 200 rounds with him, and 10,000 more must go in the waggons. If he finds all right at Mangwe, as I suppose he will, he must leave his waggon and the extra ammunition with Mr. Selous, and then push on to Tati, and, if he can, to Palapye; but the moment he meets a check or finds the break in the wire he must get back to Mangwe as fast as possible and report. Tell Captain Drury to be ready to start at the same time for Puri, and let him take the same ammunition and follow the same instructions as you will give to Captain Murray, but let me know at once how far the wires can be trusted."

The adjutant saluted and left the room. As the door closed behind him General Carrington turned to the Administrator and said somewhat abruptly:

"Well, my lord, what do you think of this? Was I right or wrong in telling the Commissioner that there ought to have been thirty thousand troops in South Africa before the end of the year?"

"In other words, General, you take this as proof presumptive that your prophecy was right, and that our friends, the Boers, are out on the war-path?"

"Our friends the Boers be ——— smashed. They've never been friends of ours and never will be till they've had the biggest hiding on record. Yes, I believe that's it. There is no other way of accounting for it, and to my mind for a good many other things that have happened. We ought to have smashed these niggers months ago. They oughtn't to have had a cartridge left by the end of last August, and yet here they are in every brush we have with them, blazing away as if they had all Woolwich behind them and shooting faster and straighter every week.

"Where did they get their Lee-Metfords from, and who taught them to use them? Why do they scarcely ever come out into the open now and give the Maxim a chance as they used to do? Why are the friendlies disappearing in hundreds every week? Why are a hundred other things that you know of happening if they haven't got someone behind them, and who can that someone be if it isn't the Boers? God grant that there may be another explanation, but I'll be hanged if I can see one."

"I hope you are wrong, General," replied Lord Grey very seriously, "but I confess I can see no other explanation at present. At any rate there is obviously only one thing to

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be done till we get definite news, and that is to act as though your suspicions were correct."

"Exactly," said Sir Frederick. "That is just what I mean to do. We must hold Mangwe and Puri at all costs, and get in touch with Salisbury as soon as possible. I hope they have got plenty of ammunition up there, for we shall want every cartridge and every gun-charge we can lay our hands on."

"To my mind," said Major Watts when the General had finished speaking, "the news from Salisbury is even more serious than the other. After all, the Kaffirs may have cut the wires on the Tuli and Palapye lines, though I admit it is not likely, but they could hardly have cut the Chimoyio line unless the rebellion has crossed the border at last. That looks rather more like an international matter to me. I hope those Portuguese beggars haven't gone back on us, and sold Beira to the Dutchmen."

"I can hardly see how they could do that," said Colonel Plumer, "unless something very big has been happening very quickly."

"To my mind there has been something very big getting ready to happen ever since Robinson allowed old Kruger and young Leyds to spoof the Home Government as they did over the Jameson business. Indeed, I don't see how we could have expected anything else. Here we have been standing by watching the Transvaal and the Free State arming every man and boy to the teeth, bringing in guns by the dozen and ammunition by the ton from Germany, importing German officers to drill their artillerymen and what they call their police, building forts and sprinkling laagers all round the frontiers for the last twelve months, and meanwhile we have been apologising to them for bringing a few hundred British troops into British territory to smash these niggers, and now here we are with about five or six thousand men in the country to tackle forty or fifty thousand of them. If the Government had made up its mind to lose South Africa it couldn't have set about the job in better fashion. Come in! Well, Turner, what's the news?"

"Selous reports all well at Mangwe and line open as far as Tati. Captain Bowden has sent out scouts from Tati to the Junction Post to find the break, and if possible get on to Palapye, but has heard nothing so far. Captain Satchwell wires from Puri that he can get nothing from Tuli. He has scouts out too but none have reported. There is no news from Maclutski of course, as Palapye is cut off. Sir Richard Martin wires from Salisbury that the line is open to Umtali. The Portuguese will make no reply from Macequece, or Chimoyio. Everything is quiet at Iron Mine, Charter, and Victoria. No rebels have been seen for some days, and scouts report generally that they have retired to the hill country behind the Matoppos. The two troops will be ready to start in half-an-hour."

Captain Scott-Turner made his report with soldierly brevity and directness, and it was received by the General and the members of his staff in serious, almost ominous, silence.

It left no doubt but that, however it had come to pass, all the main lines of communication between Rhodesia and the south and east of Africa were cut, and that for the time being those responsible for the defence and government of the country must act entirely at their own discretion and on their own responsibility.

It will here save time and future interruptions of the narrative if we leave the General and his staff to make their arrangements for dealing with the inexplicable emergency with which they were so suddenly faced, and take a brief survey of the course of the second Matabili war during the latter half of 1896.

Up to the middle of June all appearances pointed to the speedy break-up of the native power under the ably-planned tactics and vigorous attacks of Sir Frederick Carrington and the officers and men under his command. Then a sudden change had come over the campaign. The Matabili impis forsook their old mode of fighting, and, clearing entirely out of the open bush country in which they had been defeated time after time, vanished—some into the wilderness of the north-west towards Zambesi, and some into the difficult mountain country between the Matoppos and the Selous Pioneer Road, and then they began to play what was obviously a waiting game.

Almost simultaneously the Mashona tribes rose under Makone and Chibi, the two most powerful chiefs in the country, and the war became one of ambuscades and night attacks of difficult and costly marches through mountain valleys and gorges lined by concealed marksmen, who, as Sir Frederick had hinted, shot wonderfully straight for natives, and who vanished with disgusting celerity before the harrased and exasperated troopers could get within striking distance of them.

Again and again it had been suspected that this strange change of tactics was not originated by the natives themselves, and yet no white man had never been seen among them. Only the fact remained that as the encounters became rarer and more difficult to bring about their shooting continued to improve, and their supply of ammunition seemed inexhaustible. Many of the troopers, too, had fallen under bullets fired from Lee-Metford rifles, most of them of the "split" type, which broke up on touching a bone and inflicted the most fearful wounds.

Thus the war had dragged on month after month in spite of everything that skill and valour could do to bring matters to a decisive issue until now the cutting of the wires and the isolation of Rhodesia seemed to indicate that at length the mysterious power which had been fighting behind or through the rebels for so long was about to declare itself by some decisive action.

At this time there were about two thousand seven hundred white troops in Rhodesia, and of these about a thousand were distributed on the road between Buluwayo and Salisbury; some twelve hundred were stationed in and about Buluwayo itself. Mr. Selous held the Mangwe Pass, which is a mountain defile some twenty-five miles long about sixty miles south-west of Buluwayo, with three hundred men, four Maxims, and two seven-pounders. Captain Bowden occupied the Puri camp with two hundred men and two Maxims, while Fort Tuli and Palapye, having been considered perfectly safe, had only been occupied by a few troopers and transport officers charged with the duty of forwarding supplies, and, if necessary, acting as escorts to the mail coaches.

From this it will be seen that, granted the correctness of General Carrington's suspicion, the position of the British and Colonial forces in Rhodesia was an extremely serious one. With not quite three thousand men who could be re-

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lied on, for, as the General had said, the Friendlies had been deserting in hundreds, and were, therefore, no longer to be trusted, they were confronted by large but unknown numbers of the rebels hidden away in the defiles of the Matoppo hills and the forests of the back country, and flanked to the southward by the still unknown force which had suddenly cut their communication with their main base of supplies at Mafeking; while to the north, again, Salisbury was cut off from the railway and the sea apparently as completely as Buluwayo was from the south.

The position, too, was as embarrassing as it was serious. To march southward with any force adequate to reopen communication with Palapye and Mafeking would be to leave Buluwayo and the road to the north open to the attack of the Matabele impis, who would concentrate as quickly as they could scatter, and who would be certain to make a desperate, and possibly successful, attack upon the town the moment they knew that the bulk of its defenders had been withdrawn.

On the other hand, if the cutting of the communications was really due to the Boers, and they had actually declared war, or, what was the same thing with them, gone on the warpath without further formalities, they would already be massing in force along the two southern routes, and possibly by this time they were advancing on Buluwayo, in which case the little army of occupation must speedily find itself between two fires, with the savage impis in front of it, and the well-mounted, well-armed commandos of the Boers in their rear.

"There is nothing else for it, gentlemen," said General Carrington at the close of a council of war at which these and many other points had been earnestly reviewed and debated. "We must carry out the work that we came here to do first, and that as speedily as possible.

"In other words, we must clear those niggers out of the Matoppos and drive them down on the Nuanetzi and smash them there at any cost, and as quickly as possible. Selous will have nearly four hundred men at Mangwe when Murray gets there, and I think he can be trusted to keep the Boers busy there so long as the ammunition holds out. He'll be playing with them at their own game of potting from behind stones, and a little of that will go a long way with them.

"I shall send two hundred more men down to Puri and ask you to take command of the position, Colonel Plumer, with Captain Bowden as your second. I shall ask Sir Richard Martin to move down on Victoria with every man and all the ammunition that can be spared from Salisbury, as I don't think any attack is possible there, unless, of course, we are at war with Portugal, and in that case we must leave the Pungwe to the Imperial Government. Your lordship will, I presume, remain in Buluwayo.

"Major Watts, I shall leave you with two hundred men to look after the town. Captain Wheeler will stay with you in charge of the artillery, and, of course, all the men in the place will hold themselves ready for service if necessary. I needn't tell you what to do in case of an attack, which is most unlikely. I shall start myself an hour before sunrise, with the rest of the troops for the hills.

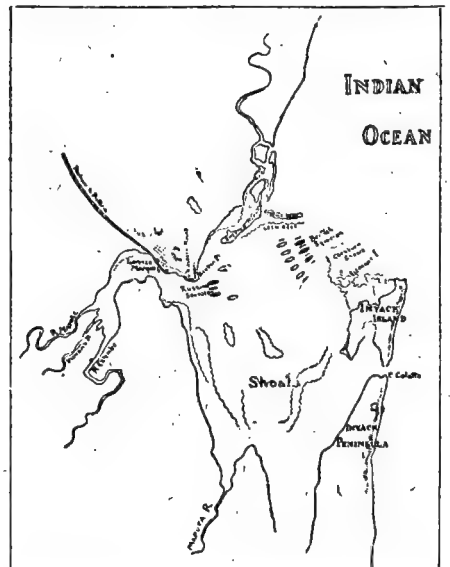
"We shall probably be pretty busy until Sir Richard Martin reaches Victoria; but by the time he gets there I hope we shall be driving the niggers down on the Nuanetzi, or perhaps the Bubye, though I shall try and head them off from the south if possible. In that case he'll have to push on down the road to Lundi and bring his column up the river bank, so that we can catch them between us. If we can manage this, that part of the problem will be solved, and by that time we shall know what the Boers are doing. If they really are on the warpath, I shall trust to you, Colonel Plumer, and Selous and Murray not to let them pass Puri or Mangwe till Sir Richard and myself come up, and then we'll see what we can do with them. The men will parade at half-past four in full marching order. Now, gentlemen, good-night, and if any of you can manage to dream anything in the shape of a way out of this fix that we seem to be in, I shall be glad to hear of it in the morning."

CHAPTER VI.

The Keyhole of Africa.

While the events which have just been narrated were taking place in the Transvaal and Rhodesia, certain others had been happening far away, as regards distance, yet for all that very closely connected with them, which had a very considerable effect in tangling still further the already involved web of international diplomacy.

A foreknowledge of them, had that been possible, would



Map of Delagoa Bay, illustrating chapters VI., VII., and VIII.

have very considerably modified the policy, not only of Prince Paul Regna and his beautiful daughter, but also of Mr. Secretary Leyds and the Transvaal Executive.

In order to arrive at a proper understanding of them, it will be necessary to put the clock back about a month, and to shift the scene from the Transvaal and Rhodesia, first to British waters and then to Delagoa Bay, "the keyhole of Africa," as it has been by no means inaptly termed.

At the close of the British Naval Manœuvres certain warships had disappeared, their disappearance having been accounted for by the official statement that they had been dispatched to relieve other ships of a similar class at distant stations, which they could not possibly reach at the ordinary ten-steaming rate of ten knots under five or six weeks.

As a matter of fact they didn't do anything of the kind. On the contrary, they coaled up to their fullest capacity, took in their full complement of powder, shell, and small-arm ammunition at Queenstown, Milford Haven, Plymouth, Portland, and Portsmouth, and steamed away to sea with a singular unanimity of direction for vessels which the newspapers of the day after their sailing described as having departed for widely different parts of the globe.

Twenty-four days later the officials of Lorenco Marquez were startled out of their habitual somnolence by the apparition of the most powerful flying squadron that had ever floated on the waters of their lovely bay. It happened,

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He looked at it and read its meaning.

singularly enough, that two Russian battleships, the *Navarin* and the *Gangout*, with the cruisers *Rurick* and *Russia*, and the torpedo-destroyer *Sokol* were also lying there—a fact which was not unconnected with the dispatch of a certain telegram from Pretoria and the sudden sailing of a steam yacht after Mr. Michael Ostroff had replied to it to the effect that Prince Regna's luggage was coming up immediately.

The first intimation of the arrival of the British squadron was given by the destroyer *Thrasher*, which came tearing into the bay, at something between twenty-five and twenty-six knots, about daybreak on the 17th of December.

She slowed up as she entered the harbour, saluted the Russians by dipping her ensign as she passed, then ran in alongside the jetty, nearly opposite the old castle, and landed a lieutenant and twenty bluejackets, who marched rapidly up the quay to the foot of the Rua Guato y Castero, which leads to the Plaza, very much to the astonishment of a few drowsy loafers, mostly negroes, who were about at that early hour.

The Lieutenant presented a portentous-looking document, bearing the royal arms of Portugal, to the sentry on duty at the custom house, and demanded to see the officer of the guard at once. The sight of a handful of silver instantly dissipated the drowsiness and official surliness of the sentry. For the nonce he became as alert as he was polite, pocketed the silver with a salute, and proceeded to awake the officer of the guard from his morning slumber with a recklessness that only the possession of about a year's pay in hard cash could properly have warranted.

The officer looked in stupefied amazement at the document, read it three times over regardless of the manifest impatience of the Lieutenant, and then handed it back with a bow, saying:

"I cannot understand it, Senor; but no less can I disobey the orders of His Sacred Majesty. You and your men are free to pass. I will acquaint the Governor as soon as His Excellency rises."

The Lieutenant of the *Thrasher* returned the officer of the guard's punctilious salute correctly but somewhat hurriedly, and marched his men straight up by Point Reuben Road to the telegraph house and wired via Durban to Capetown the single word "Here." He then informed the clerk in charge that every message received or dispatched over the cables or the land lines must be immediately submitted to him under authority of the British and Portuguese Governments; and in substantiation of this somewhat extraordinary demand, he first presented the document which had gained him admission to the town, and then hinted pretty plainly that if this were not accepted as sufficient, the question would have to be decided by *force majeure*.

The clerk looked at the document and then at the Lieutenant, and then at the twenty bluejackets, armed to the teeth and looking extremely businesslike, and, being a man of business, he simply said:

"Very well, sir. It is a most extraordinary—I may say, in fact, unheard of—proceeding; but as you appear to have both right and might on your side, of course, I can do nothing but place myself and the wires at your disposal. At the same time, under the circumstances, I suppose you will have no objection to my calling the Director of the station to make the arrangements with you? To tell you the truth, I scarcely care to undertake the responsibility myself."

"I've not the slightest objection to that," said the Lieutenant, "but I'd rather you didn't leave the instrument for the present, at any rate, until I get my reply from Capetown. How long do you think that will be?"

"If the lines are clear you may get an answer in half an hour," replied the clerk, looking up rather uneasily.

"As long as that? Of course you'll find the line clear, or at least I fancy so. However, if it will be as long as that perhaps you had better go and call the Director."

Nothing loth, the clerk left his seat and the room, and in a very few minutes the Director came back with him. The necessary explanations were soon over, as the conditions of the case left but little room for argument, especially after the Lieutenant had given his pledge that the British Government would be responsible for the hire of the line to Cape Town during the time that it was at his disposal.

These little preliminaries being concluded, Lieutenant Mark Ferris, of Her Majesty's torpedo-destroyer *Thrasher*, offered the Director a cigarette from a very neat little curved silver case, which he took from an appropriate resting-place in the watch-pocket of his waistcoat—it had two neatly entwined monograms engraved on the side that reposed next to his heart—took one for himself, lit it, and asking the Director to excuse him for a moment, pencilled the two letters "O.K." on a piece of paper, called two of his men and sent them down to the quay with it, then he said to the Director:

"I suppose there is a pretty good view of the bay from your platform up yonder on the roof?"

"Oh, yes," was the reply. "Anything interesting likely to be going on?"

"Well, very possibly," said the Lieutenant, answering the Director's smile with another.

"Ah! then in that case, perhaps, you wouldn't object to join me in an early cup of coffee up there, or would you prefer whisky and soda?"

"Coffee with pleasure," said the Lieutenant. "It's a bit early for whisky and soda, even in Delagoa Bay. If you'll allow me, I'll have a couple of my men in here, so that one of them can bring me the answer up. It's important, you know, that I should have it immediately it arrives."

"Oh, ah! yes, of course if you wish it," replied the Director, looking rather curiously at him.

"Thanks. Can't afford any mistakes, just now, you see. It will be particularly awkward, not to say a trifle serious, as I expect you'll be able to see for yourself before long. Now I'll just call my two fellows in, and then I'm at your service. We may miss something if we wait much longer."

As soon as the two bluejackets had received their orders the Director and the Lieutenant went up to the look-out platform, which commanded a magnificent view of the inner harbour between Ruebon Point and Mawhone Point.

Some fifteen minutes passed in sipping coffee, puffing cigarettes, and rather desultory conversation, the Director meanwhile thinking, and quite rightly, that his guest was curiously reticent and preoccupied.

At length the latter looked at his watch for about the fifth time, got up from his chair, pulled a small but very powerful binocular telescope out of his pocket and proceeded to scan the ships in the bay intently through it, meanwhile humming gently to himself between the puffs of his cigar-

ette disjointed fragments of a tune which the Director recognised as an imperfectly rendered version of "After the Ball." Suddenly he blew the stump from his lips with a short, sharp whistle which was echoed as it were, by the distant bang of a gun from the bay.

"Blank!" he said as the hills about the harbour rolled out their answer to the report. "A good job it wasn't shotted at that range. Ah! that one meant business," he went on as another bang, deeper toned than the first, broke the stillness of the early tropic morning.

Then the Director heard something very like a sigh of relief, and after that came the muttered words:

"That's an act of war; no mistake about that. No court martial now, thank God! Lucky it didn't hit her. Now then, *Thrasher*, my little beauty, every knot you've got. Put her into it, Stevens! Hurrah! missed again! Ah! there comes the fleet! Now, gentlemen, you'll have to shoot a bit straighter than that, or we shall have to teach you."

The Director had sprung from his seat at the sound of the first shot about as quickly as if he had expected the shell to burst under his chair. He came to the Lieutenant's side and said rather nervously:

"May I ask what the meaning of all this is, sir? Is it possible that war has been declared between ourselves and Russia?"

"Yes, sir, that shot means war," said the Lieutenant somewhat shortly, and turned his glasses seaward again.

The scene before him could hardly have been more interesting, not to say exciting, even to a sailor and an officer situated as Lieutenant Ferris was. As the *Thrasher* had started from the jetty at about half speed, a signal flew from the *Navarin* ordering her to stop and come alongside. This had been answered by the destroyer with a sudden leap forward, and the flinging up of two clouds of spray from her bow in obedience to the signal, "Full speed ahead," and under the whole impetus of her six thousand horse-power engines, the long black craft had rushed away through the smooth water of the bay at a speed that was not very far short of thirty-five statute miles an hour.

Then had come the blank charge from the *Navarin's* six-inch breechloaders, quickly followed by a shell—so quickly indeed, that the Lieutenant saw that the second gun must have been ready loaded.

This meant a good deal. It meant, in a word, that the Russians strongly suspected the designs of the *Thrasher*, and were ready to stop her getting away, even at the risk of committing an act of war.

The shell burst only a few yards wide of the flying little craft, then out of a dun-smoke cloud that had been lying along the eastern horizon across the wide mouth of the harbour since the light had been strong enough to show it, there came the flash of a pale stream of flame, and a few seconds later a shell burst high up in the air over the bay.

"A well-timed shell, that," said the Lieutenant. "They ought to see from that we have not sent the little *Thrasher* alone to fight the squadron. That was one of the *Terrible's* nine-inch, I suppose. Ah, here she comes! Now, I suppose there will be a bit of a row. Missed her again! That's shockingly bad shooting, gentlemen. There, she's round the Point! Well done, Stevens! Has that answer come yet?"

"Yes, sir," said one of the bluejackets who had just come up the platform. He saluted and handed the Lieutenant a seemingly meaningless jumble of words. He looked at it, and read its meaning thus:

"Hold cable, and capture or destroy enemy at all cost. Admiral proceed Cape Town, leaving *Revenge*, *Edgar*, *Thrasher*, Delagoa."

"That will do, Roberts. Go down and wait for anything else that comes," said the Lieutenant as he folded the paper up and put it in his pocket. Then he turned to the Director and said: "Now, sir, you must understand that war is virtually declared between Great Britain and Russia. A British squadron is coming to capture or sink all the warships in the bay, and to take possession of the harbour for the time being. You, however, needn't trouble about that, as it has been arranged between the two governments. Now will you be good enough to hoist the red ensign on the flagstaff at once. When you've done so I'll explain matters as far as I can."

The Director nodded and left the platform.

While this was taking place at the telegraph station the Russian warships had slipped their cables and were heading out to sea. The Portuguese battleship *Vasco da Gama*, which was lying near them, contented herself with hoisting her flag and remaining quietly at anchor as though the matter did not concern her very much. Lieutenant Ferris stood with his eyes glued to his glasses, inwardly fuming, and feeling anything but contented with the really important duty that he had so successfully performed, and watched the preliminaries of the fight that was coming with such patience as he could muster, which was not very much.

(To be continued).

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SHORT STORIES ABOUT THE WAR.

We devote, every week, two pages of *Short Stories* to pithy, humourous anecdotes similar to those which appear in these columns. A prize of £1 1s. will be sent to the reader who submits the best storyette this week, and a copy of "The Member's Wife," by the Hon. Mrs. Henry Chetwynd, to each of those whose attempts are used. The anecdotes may be either original or selected; in the latter case the source must be stated. The prize of One Guinea offered for the best Storyette in this competition has been won this week by Mr. E. Makepeace, 24 Hood Street, Morpeth. Attempts for this week's prize should deal with WAR ANECDOTES and must reach the Storyette Editor, *Short Stories* Office, Henrietta Street, Strand, London, W.C., by Monday, March 5th. Post-cards only, please.

"Which Eye?"

DURING the bombardment of Alexandria, in 1882, Lord Charles Beresford asked a gunner if he could hit a man who was on the fort. The gunner replied:

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Then hit him in the eye," said Lord Charles.

And he was considerably astonished when the gunner replied:

"Which eye, sir?" E. M.

Fully Qualified.

A YOUNG fellow the other day presented himself at a certain recruiting station and volunteered for service in South Africa.

"Can you ride?" asked the sergeant in charge.

"Yes," replied the would-be volunteer.

"Can you shoot—that is, shoot from the saddle?"

"Yes."

The sergeant, however, was not satisfied with the fellow's bare word concerning these qualifications, and accordingly led the way to a courtyard at the back.

"Now then," said the sergeant, as a horse kept for the purpose of testing the riding capabilities of applicants was brought forth, "let me see what you can do."

The young fellow clambered into the saddle, and the horse after walking a few paces broke into a canter, then into a gallop, and at a crack from the sergeant's whip suddenly stopped dead, shooting the rider clean out of the saddle on to the ground.

"No good coming here with a pack of lies," said the sergeant good-humouredly.

"Pack of lies," exclaimed the fallen and crest-fallen applicant from his seat on the ground, "I never told you a word of a lie. If I hadn't been a good rider I should have been seriously hurt, and as for shooting, did you ever see a fellow shoot from the saddle as I did just now? You can't help admitting, sergeant, that I'm fully qualified." C. R. F.

Commandeered It.

ONE morning a few weeks ago a soldier entered the camp at Modder River leading a scraggy-looking goat by a piece of string.

His entrance was the signal for a burst of laughter from his comrades.

"What ho, Dick!" cried one of them. "Wot 'ave you got there? 'Ave you stolen it?"

"Stolen it be blowed!" said Dick. "I've commandeered it, an' left my blooming receipt chalked on a tree." A. H.

"A Terrible Accident."

A MANCHESTER soldier now at the front in describing how they make "duff" whilst on board and dispose of it, says:

"We had a terrible accident the other day with our duff.

"After making it, we took it to the cook-house where they boiled it. When it was served at dinner-time, it was all dough in the middle, so we took it back and roasted it for tea.

"When we got it, we broke three picks, four spades, ten knives, and seven forks, trying to cut or break it. At last we threw it overboard, and as we threw it the boat ran into it.

"It shook the ship from stern to stern; the captain stopped the engines, thinking we had struck a rock. After sounding the well they found the ship wasn't leaking, and when we told the captain what it was, he was going to put us in the guard-room for wasting Government rations." G. N.

It Certainly Would be Awkward.

A RAILWAY man responsible for the transit of a giraffe from Liverpool to London managed to get the animal on a truck, but it would not lie down, neither would it be seated. He coaxed it, pleaded with it, and tried to make it lie down; but in vain.

It gave the man a stony stare, and continued its melancholy clatter on the truck floor.

"Why are tha struggling with, Jim?" asked the goods guard, with a winsome smile, as he walked by.

"Well," replied the panting servant, "I'll reckon tha'll have some strugglin' wi' him when t' train gets t' first bridge. If tha' doesn't tie his neck in a knot, he'll have his head knocked off!" W. T.

She Knew.

"DID the postman leave any letters, Mary?" the mistress asked, on returning from a visit one afternoon.

"Nothing but a post-card, ma'am."

"Who is it from, Mary?"

"And do you think I'd read it, ma'am?" asked the girl, with an injured air.

"Perhaps not. But anyone who sends me a message on a post card is either stupid or impertinent."

"You'll excuse me, ma'am," returned the girl, loftily, "but that's a nice way to be talking about your own mother!" S. E.

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Where He Served.

A certain colonel (now dead) was noted for his generosity. He had lost an arm during the Indian Mutiny, and this made him very sympathetic towards all who had met with similar losses.

While walking on his estate one day he met an old one-legged man, evidently in abject poverty.

"Ah! you have met with a great misfortune, like myself, I see," remarked the colonel.

"Ah!" replied the old man, "and like yersel', colonel, I have spent a great pairt o' my life in Her Majesty's service, and seen a hantle o' hard work."

"My poor man!" exclaimed the kind-hearted colonel, as he pushed a half-crown into the old man's hand, "I fear you have received but a poor reward for your services."

"Ye may weel say that, colonel," replied the veteran as he hobbled away.

"But," added the colonel, "you didn't tell me where you served."

"Weel, if it comes to that," the old reprobate answered with a sly chuckle, "I served my time i' the Perth Penitentiary, whaur they gie'd me fourteen years for stealin' a cadger's horse!" J. H.

No Doubt About It.

A certain well-known general, in recently reviewing a crack Hussar Regiment, under orders for South Africa, suddenly stopped before a splendid-looking fellow, and asked abruptly:

"Which is the best horse in the regiment, my man?"

"No. 40, sir."

"What makes you think he is the best horse?"

"He walks, trots, and gallops well, is a good leaper, has no vice, no blemish, carries his head well, is in his prime."

"And who is the best soldier in the regiment?"

"Jim Nolan, sir."

"Why?"

"Because he is an honourable man, is obedient, tidy, takes good care of his equipment and his horse, and does his duty well."

"And who is the rider of the best horse?"

"Jim Nolan, sir."

"And who is Jim Nolan?"

"I am, sir!"

The general could not help laughing as he wished him good luck when at the front. F. W. F.

Working Under Difficulties.

There is an amusing story of a labourer who, failing to get a job of any other sort, at length took service as a diver at some new harbour works. Well, they got him into the kit, explained all about the communicating-cord to him, screwed his big helmet on, and let him go overboard. For six or seven minutes he was lost in the lower blue; then he signalled to be hauled up.

"Take this thing off my head," he shouted, and they removed his helmet.

"Boys," he continued, "this business is no sort o' good to me at all."

"Why not?" they asked.

"Because," said he, "I'll niver work where I can't shpit on me hands!" E. S.

Just a Difference in the Time.

The composer, Sir Henry Smart, played at organ in a London church, and his recital after church excited much attention; but one morning, after a selection from one of Mozart's masses, a churchwarden came into the organ loft, and "begged to inform Mr. Smart that they had decided that they could not have such jiggy stuff played in their church."

"Very well, sir," was the answer, "it shall be altered."

On the next Sunday dirge-like sounds proceeded from the organ, and the churchwarden congratulated the player on the solemn and elevating effect of the music.

"I am glad you like it," answered Mr. Smart; "doubtless if I played it a little quicker you will see the reason it affected you," and, suiting the action to the word, the popular strains of "Jump Jim Crow," resounded from the organ.

After this Henry Smart played what he liked.

N. W.

A Girl With Ready Wit.

A young woman who lives near a railway crossing, looking out of the window the other day, saw a labourer jump from one set of metals to the other to escape an approaching train. He was apparently dazed by terror, and stood still, not seeing that an express train was rushing down upon him.

The girl saw that before she could make him understand his danger it would be too late. She therefore threw up her arms, shrieking wildly: "Help! help!" trusting to the impulse which sends a man on the instant to the relief of a woman in distress.

"I'm coming!" shouted the labourer, springing towards her in time to escape the engine as it rushed past.

He stared back at it, and then at the woman crying and laughing in the window, and, taking off his hat with shaking hands, said:

"I owe you something, miss," and walked away.

A. T.

Some People Never Satisfied.

Some years ago a wealthy manufacturer in Canada, employing nearly a thousand hands, established a "model" city, thus giving the workmen and their families many comforts and luxuries that they could not have attained unaided. Of course, there were regulations to govern the model city, which, as a rule, were cheerfully observed.

There were fault-finders, however, and especially a new-comer, named Bascomb. Among the rules was one forbidding the burning of soft coal, on account of the odour and smoke, and Bascomb objected strongly.

"My goodness!" remonstrated a friend, "I don't see what you are growling about. We get hard coal at cost price, and, as one ton goes as far as two of the other, you ain't out of pocket."

"'Tain't right to forbid it," asserted Bascomb.

"Look here," demanded his friend, "do you really want to burn the nasty stuff?"

"No, I don't wanter," replied Bascomb, "but I wanter have the right in case I wanter!" B. S.

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The Island of Zalenda.

SOMETHING had gone wrong with our engines, and, being in the Pacific Ocean, we put in for repairs to an island that happened just handy; latitude 20deg. south, longitude 120deg., or thereabouts.

No, it's no good your looking it up; you won't find it marked on any map or chart. The island was of volcanic origin, I believe (certainly, its inhabitants were!) and it has disappeared as mysteriously as it came into being. It was peopled by a race of beings who dressed and behaved, in most respects, like Europeans. All the luxuries and refinements of civilization were cultivated there to the highest pitch; all the arts and sciences as thoroughly understood as in the most enlightened countries of the West. When we first sighted the land, with its vast harbour full of shipping, and its noble public buildings, Captain Murdoch was amazed, never having heard of the place; but he was an old seaman, not much given to marvelling at things, and looked upon the matter as a rare piece of good luck in being able, so unexpectedly, to have his machinery skilfully mended.

Having nothing to do during our enforced stay on the island, we all bent our attention to exploring the town and neighbourhood, and having a good time generally. The inhabitants were very friendly, and treated us with the utmost hospitality.

Frank Lennox, the second officer, and I made the acquaintance of an influential merchant and member of Parliament, named Xilio, who invited us to take up our quarters at his house during our sojourn at Zalenda. He had two beautiful daughters, Melia and Seraphis. Their personal attractions were much enhanced by the artistic yet simple costume worn by the ladies of the place. It consists of a flowing, classic robe, girt round the waist with a gold chain, looped up on, one shoulder with a diamond pin, draped off the other and leaving arms, throat, and feet bare.

When I inform you that these girls' intellectual attainments were equal to their physical charms, will it surprise you to hear that two susceptible and impressionable young men fell in love—Lennox with Seraphis and myself with her sister Melia. The latter was fancy free; but poor Lennox was treading upon far more dangerous ground with Seraphis.

It is far easier to watch the course of others' love affairs than one's own. There was a young man named Kolophen, who was a constant visitor at Xilio's house. When he came one day, and found Frank and Seraphis on the veranda, sitting very close together, her fair, hair brushing his cheek, his arm, I believe—but of this I am not quite sure—around her slender waist, I detected an unmistakeable gleam of hatred in the dark passionate face of the young Zalendanese; but, like most of his countrymen, he was polite and reserved, and said nothing.

Xilio just then entered, and the pair of turtle doves on the veranda naturally drew apart. Conversation turned upon the subject of political and social institutions, and many were the questions asked me respecting European ways and customs.

"Your form of government here is republican?" I asked in return.

"Of course!" our host answered, as though no other form of rule were admissible to a logical mind. "Our parliament is constantly trying experiments; giving a year or two's trial to some eccentric law, in order to see how it will work for the people's good, I myself do not always approve. This leads me to speak of the one dark tragedy in our code."

"Ah, I know what you mean," Seraphis said plaintively; "please do not tell them, father, it might drive the Englishmen away."

Kolophen's looks said "I wish to heaven it would!" as plain as looks could speak.

"That cannot be," said Melia, in her sweet, flute-like voice. "Darcy and Lennox are of those who go down to the sea in ships, and such are always brave men."

But Seraphis had her own way, which I noticed always happened to this young lady. Ah! had she not done so a terrible calamity might have been averted. But there who can foresee the future or alter the decrees of destiny?

It happened on the following day that Lennox and I were strolling along the main street of the town when we met Kolophen. My friend saluted him politely, but the native was in no mood for amiable intercourse.

"Englishman," he began abruptly, "you have offered your base love to Seraphis, the younger daughter of Xilio, knowing full well that I—I, Kolophen, the son of Aramsis, have been betrothed to her ever since the days of our childhood."

"I—I did not know," Frank began, taken by surprise; "I am a stranger here, remember, Mr. Kolophen, and am very sorry if I have unwittingly caused any trouble."

"Sorry! Take your sorrows with you to the uttermost ends of the world!"

What followed was so rapid that there was no time for me to interfere—no time for anything but to realise the horror of it. Kolophen had whipped out a little jewelled dagger, stabbed the young sailor to the heart, and Frank Lennox lay on the pavement by my side a bleeding corpse.

The assassin folded his arms across his breast and never moved. Aye, and what was more extraordinary than all, a policeman, or *peelah* as they are called in Zalenda, stood on the opposite side of the street calmly looking on.

"You saw that?" I exclaimed, rushing across to the

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officer, as soon as I had ascertained that the poor young fellow was indeed dead.

"I saw," he answered imperturbably.

"Then why do you not arrest that man?"

"I cannot. There must have been a quarrel or some strong provocation. No gentleman would otherwise resort to such an extreme measure."

Good heavens! What a dreadful country this was, where a limb of the law called a cold-blooded murder merely an extreme measure!

"But, man alive!" I cried excitedly, "provocation or no provocation, there is a monstrous crime committed."

"It is no crime in this country, my dear sir. Go to Xilio's. I will see that your poor friend's body is directly conveyed there."

I went, and with tones full of rage and excitement poured out my tragic tale into my host's ears. Seraphis uttered a wild cry and threw herself upon a couch in an agony of grief, while Melia tried to console her.

"Poor Lennox!" said Xilio; "he was a fine fellow, too."

"But I am told his assassin can go unpunished according to your code of laws?"

"Yes, that is so. But does not the same hold good in your own England, only in a different form?"

"Good heavens, no!"

"Oh, yes. When murder is committed with you, you doom the supposed culprit to death on evidence which may all be false, the verdict of a jury and the sentence of a judge who may all be mistaken. Then again, you have what you call war—utterly unknown in our higher civilization. There the man who kills goes unpunished; and the soldier slays and is slain for quarrels not his own, which makes his conduct foolish as well as wicked. I have spoken strongly against our Act to legalise homicide, but when I hear of the institutions of other parts of the globe, I really cannot see the difference. Is it not a fact that some speakers with you, who considered themselves philosophers, in discussing the problem of war *versus* arbitration, were monstrous enough to say that war was a salutary means of doing away with some of the superabundant population?"

I stammered that I believed some such sentiments had been uttered, but asked him if the voice of conscience did not speak in the breasts of his blood-thirsty compatriots.

"Does it speak in that of your soldier, or your judge, your jury, or your hangman?" he retorted. "Bah! what you are pleased to call the voice of conscience is only the fear of punishment."

Xilio left me utterly dumfounded by the conclusion of his discourse; my host's *tu quoque* line of argument was so hard to answer according to his lights. I was aroused from my reverie upon these complex problems of life by the sensation of two soft white arms round my neck. It was Melia.

"And you will go back now to England thinking badly of us," she said; "and then you will forget——"

"Forget you, darling? Never!"

"But you must leave here at once. Your life may not be safe."

"What, leave you, my Melia?"

Great Scot! I knew now, if I never did before, I that must be badly smitten indeed. Here was I, a sober young Englishman, clinging to a land of justifiable homicides, all for the sake of this one sweet girl.

"If—if you could take me with you?" she exclaimed.

"What, loved one!" I said, taking both her hands in mine, and drawing her to me; "would you come to England and be my wife?"

"Oh, yes!"

"But your people?"

"There is no one here that matters. My mother is dead. A greengrocer killed her because she accused him of giving false weight in potatoes. My father is always wrapped up in politics. As for Seraphis, it seems she truly loved your poor friend. But it was not right of her to trifle with Kolophen, I have just taken her to her room. She is half distracted. She swears she will slay Kolophen the first time she meets him. They would think nothing of that here, but somehow—I cannot tell why—I could not like her so much after. Then Aramsis, the father of Kolophen, would probably kill my sister and then my father would kill Aramsis. It would be so unpleasant!"

I shuddered. The fiercest of Corsican vendettas seemed nothing compared with this.

"You know, dear girl, that if you go to England you may not kill your fellow creature as is the custom here?"

I thought it as well to mention this, so as to save any little unpleasantness that might arise from the peculiarities of her nation on landing at home.

"I know," said the dear girl, sweetly; "I don't mind. Bid my father farewell," she continued, "but say nothing to him; it will be best so. Go to your ship, warn your brave companions of their danger. I will join you there. Leave the rest to me."

I was more than ever impressed by the soundness of Melia's judgment. If I asked Xilio for his daughter's hand in marriage, the old gentleman might be a little cross, and I had already seen a tragic proof of what the anger of a Zalendanese meant. So I hurried away to find Captain Murdoch and apprise him of what had happened. Fortunately, the arrangements for departure were nearly complete, and I found the worthy skipper wrangling with a local official over excessive harbour dues.

"Pay you a hundred pieces of gold!" he was shouting; "absurd! you are a pack of heathen thieves!"

"For Heaven's sake, don't quarrel with them, captain," I cried, "or they will murder you!"

"Murder me? Pooh! Nonsense! They are not savages here, and while the Union Jack floats at our——"

"Oh, hang the Union Jack! Much they care for that, here. I tell you, Captain, that murder goes unpunished on this confounded island. Poor Lennox is dead!"

"Lennox dead!"

"Yes, and you shall share the same fate for your insolence!" exclaimed the harbour official, rushing upon Murdoch, but at that moment a white figure interposed, and held the man back with a commanding gesture.

It was my betrothed who had come down to the landing-stage, a travelling-bag in her hand—evidently meaning business. As the daughter of an M.P., she exercised considerable rights, and thus Melia saved the captain's life. We all jumped into the boat which was waiting for us, made for the offing where our ship lay, and soon weighed anchor, bound for Old England.

Melia has now got quite into our ways, and never speaks of her native country and its amiable customs. Perhaps that is the reason why my narrative has been received in some quarters with that incredulity with which sceptical people look upon the most veracious of travellers' stories.

L. E. Stephens.

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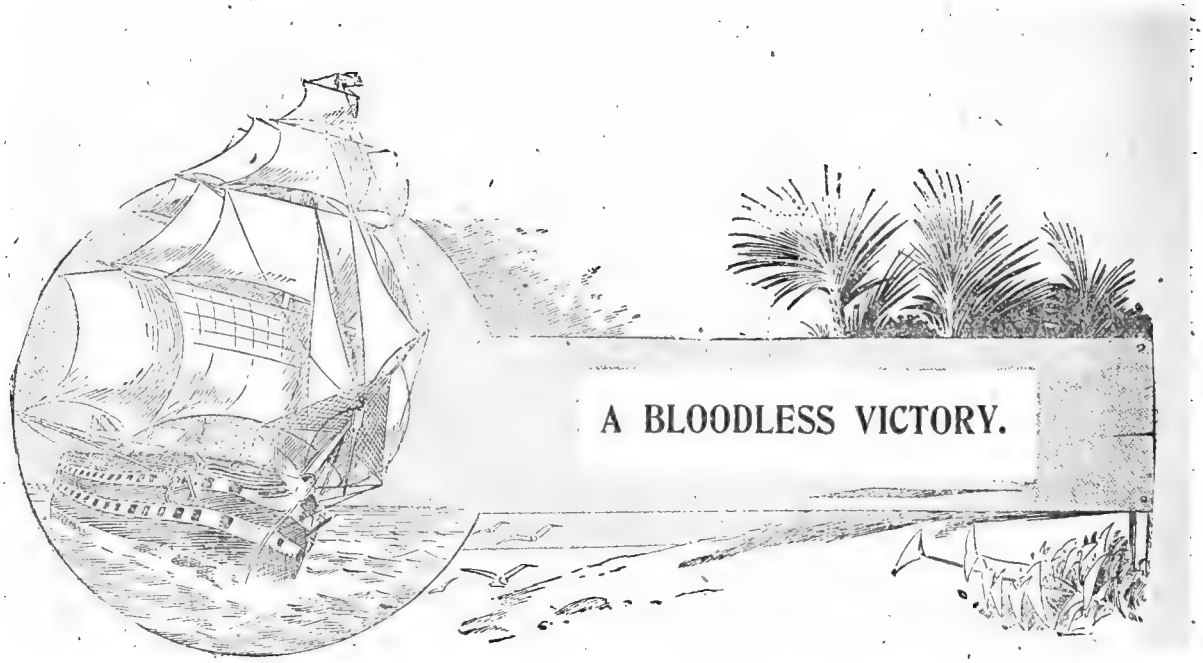

A BLOODLESS VICTORY.

THE utmost secrecy had attended the construction of Her Majesty's cruiser *Scourge*. Her keel was laid in the large stone dry-dock at the Chatham Dockyard, about which a high board fence had been erected to exclude prying eyes. The material for her hull had been obtained from several manufacturers, thus baffling any attempt to discover the mutual relations of the various parts.

The further precaution was taken, after a certain amount of progress had been made upon her, of not permitting the men at work upon one portion of her hull to roam to other parts, a few reliable naval officers and trustworthy foremen being the only ones who had seen her develop in her entirety. She did not emerge from her hidden retreat until ready for sea in every particular, when, with a picked crew, she proceeded to sea at once, two weeks after the outbreak of the Anglo-French war of 1903.

As she steamed out of the harbour there was nothing in her external appearance to distinguish her notably from a second-class steel cruiser of about 3,000 tons, and a very commonplace one at that. Whatever secrets she embodied were evidently internal.

Discriminating eyes, however, quickly observed that she carried no guns and was not fitted with sponsons, ports or other places for locating them, and then it was at once recalled that, while she had been liberally supplied before leaving the dock yard with general equipment, coal and other stores, no armament or ammunition whatever had been conveyed on board, excepting three or four small quick-firing guns and a couple of maxims, and as the vessel stood out to Spithead it was seen that even these were mounted in such positions as to indicate their use solely for repelling torpedo-boat attacks.

She was practically an unarmed as well as an unarmoured vessel, and the theory at once arose that she might be merely intended to serve as a dispatch boat, after all. Yet if such was the case, no reason could be assigned for the jealous secrecy with which she had been guarded and a further obstacle to this theory was the fact that she had put to sea recklessly in the very face of several large cruisers of the enemy which were well known to be hovering off the coast. Opinion soon became about equally divided as to whether the Admiralty were extremely foolhardy or extremely sagacious.

At any rate, as the vessel steamed out into the cruiser infested Channel, no particular trepidation was discernible in the deportment of those on board. On the contrary, there was an evident eagerness to fall in with one of the enemy's ships, and in expressing this desire, no qualification was made as to the opponent's offensive or defensive powers, although several ventured the hope that the vessel encountered might be the *Carnot*, a huge, powerful cruiser of 14,000 tons displacement and twenty-two knots speed, carrying fourteen large guns in her main battery, and about thirty smaller quick-firing guns in her secondary battery.

This vessel had already wrought considerable havoc with the British mercantile service in the brief period that had elapsed since the declaration of war, and had lately sunk H.M.S. *Raglan*, a much larger vessel than the *Scourge*. The *Carnot* was now known to be off the Channel Islands, and much regret was expressed on the *Scourge* when night fell and nothing resembling her, or any other hostile vessel, for that matter, had been sighted.

The men were loth to go to their hammocks at "pipe down," most of the officers remained on deck until a late hour and it was with decided disappointment that Captain Pitner, the commanding officer, informed the new officer of the deck, when the watch was called at midnight, that for his part he preferred acting as a look-out himself throughout the night to entrusting that duty to men who did not seem to have eyes strong enough to sight a French cruiser in their way.

Yet not a light was sighted during the night, and when day broke the captain was thoroughly disgusted.

"Perfectly outrageous!" he exclaimed, impatiently, to the navigating lieutenant who stood by his side on the

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bridge, sipping his morning coffee. "For over a week these chaps have been constantly sighted in this part of the Channel, and here we are, all hands and the cook, on the look-out for twenty hours, and not a single one in sight. If we were a Thames penny steamer or an old gunboat, we would have struck a dozen an hour after leaving the Needles. Here," he added, after a pause, dropping a conversational tone for one of command, "I see only one thing to do. Cherbourg bears about south-south-west. Put the ship on that course and keep her on it until something turns up, even if it runs us into the harbour!"

Hardly had the helm been put over when a clear, exultant cry of "Sail, ho!" came down from the mast-head.

"Where away?" eagerly asked the officers on the bridge, in a breath.

"Broad off the starboard beam, sir."

"Can you make her out?"

"Yes, sir. A large steamer, bows on."

The *Scourge's* engines were at once stopped and she lay in wait for the approaching craft, which, as she drew nearer, was seen plainly to be a man-of-war, and the dense, black smoke that soon arose from her funnels showed that she had made a similar estimate of the *Scourge's* character and was putting on the forced draught to overhaul her.

"Shall I call all hands, sir?" inquired the officer of the deck.

"It is unnecessary," coolly replied Captain Pitner. "Let the watch below sleep until the usual hour. We shall only need the engineer's force and the artificers of the watch on deck for the present. You may hoist the colours. Ah, that is encouraging," he continued, closely scrutinizing the approaching vessel through the glass. "She appears to be a battleship, and flies the tricolour. Send for Mr. Kittrell, call the after duct's crews to quarters and tell Mr. Bootes to place his division in readiness for action and await orders. Head straight to windward, Mr. Gibson, and signal 'full speed' to the engine room—that is only fifteen knots, and our friend the enemy is surely making eighteen or twenty."

The big screws revolved, the cruiser headed away from her pursuer and stood on, as if straining every nerve to escape. On came the big French warship, gaining every minute. As she drew nearer, it was plain to every eye that she was a powerful vessel. Through the glass it could be seen that numerous sponsons jutted from her great black hull, indicating an extensive battery, and a closer inspection showed a threatening turret on her bows, from which protruded two particularly heavy guns.

Closer and closer she came, until only five miles separated the two vessels. Then a hazy puff rose from the pursuer's turret, a dark object hurtled past the *Scourge* and with a dull roar exploded a hundred yards ahead of her.

"Fairly good shot, that," quietly remarked the *Scourge's* cool commander. "In fact, too devilish good, for a starter. This seems to be the proper time to press the button."

At this he pressed his thumb to a button in the chart house; an answering ring showed that the signal had been received and understood below. A sepulchral voice from a speaking tube reported that the "discharge valves are in action, sir," and with a satisfied "Very good, await signal," the *Scourge's* commander once more fastened his keen eyes to the glass.

From now there was a marked increase in the interest with which those on the British cruiser regarded their pursuer. Without awaiting reveille, those below had come on deck and the rails were soon lined with eyes gazing intently astern.

"Be careful, everybody," sternly ordered Captain Pitner, immediately adding, in a pleasanter tone, "for about twenty minutes."

As he spoke another and another shot came from the enemy's ship, both shells, like the first, exploding ahead of the English cruiser.

As the foe drew nearer, within effective range of his smaller guns, several more shots came from the latter, one striking the signal yard arm, bursting and scattering fragments on the deck, fortunately without hurting anyone.

Then there was a pause. One, two, three minutes passed and not another missile came. As he pressed another signal button, a smile crept over Captain Pitner's face, which was quickly reflected on all.

Excited comments passed from mouth to mouth and then a spontaneous cheer arose from the English throats. Still the Frenchman came on, until only two miles distant.

"Starboard the helm," came the order to the *Scourge's* officer of the deck. "Go off a bit and then run parallel to the enemy's course. If he forges ahead, follow in his wake, but he'll slow down soon. When he fires again it will be with the Union Jack at the peak. Meanwhile, pipe the watch below to breakfast and have the watch on deck break out the grappling gear. Make all preparations for taking possession of the prize and notify me when we are under steerage way alongside. I am going below for a short nap now."

* * * * *

Two days after the date of the above events the Secretary of the Admiralty received the following official communication from Portsmouth:

H.M.S. *Scourge* (Second class cruiser),
Spithead.

April —, 1899.

The Right Honorable ——, Secretary of the Admiralty.

Sir,—I have the honour to report that I arrived here this day, bringing in as a prize the French battleship *Carnot*, which was captured by the vessel under my command in the English Channel on the above date.

Both vessels are intact in every particular, and I have this day transferred 523 prisoners to the custody of the Dockyard authorities.

I would respectfully state that the action of the hypnocyanogen, and the apparatus for its liberation installed on this ship, fully justified every expectation. The two after liquor-ducts were put in operation, when the *Carnot* was five miles astern, and to leeward. The hypnocyanic liquor apparently vaporized as soon as it came in contact with the sea-water, and was quite invisible but, according to the subsequent reports of prisoners, its effects were practically instantaneous upon the *Carnot's* people.

Those in the magazines and the engine and fire rooms were the last to lose consciousness, averaging ten minutes after the first man succumbed on deck. Data are lacking as to the period of the gas's influence, as the medical staff of the *Scourge* revived the victims rapidly and promptly, by means of the prescribed restoratives, as soon as we took possession.

I regret to report two casualties in connection with the capture, one of the *Carnot's* enlisted men having received a contusion by falling from the ladder of a military mast, which he had started to ascend when overcome by the fumes, and another having an eye badly inflamed from a hot cinder which fell and rested upon it while he was lying prone and unconscious upon the deck. Both men, however, are now in hospital and will soon recover.

Awaiting the orders of the department, I am very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. E. Pitner,
Captain, Commanding.

W.E.S.

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THE ANGEL OF THE REVOLUTION

By GEORGE GRIFFITH

CHAPTER LXX. (*continued.*)

On the 8th of January a swift warship, attended by two dynamite cruisers, left Portsmouth, bound for Odessa. She had on board the last of the Czars of Russia and those of his generals and Ministers who had been taken prisoners with him on Muswell Hill. A thousand feet overhead floated the *Ariel*, under the command of Alexis Mazanoff.

From Odessa the prisoners were taken by train to Moscow. There, in the Central Convict Depôt, they met their families and the officials whose share in their crimes made it necessary to bring them under the sentence pronounced by Natas. They were chained together in squads, Czar and Prince, noble and official, exactly as their own countless victims had been in the past, and so they were taken with their wives and children by train to Ekaterinenburg.

Although the railway extended as far as Tomsk, Mazanoff made them disembark here and marched them by the Great Siberian Road to the Pillar of Farewells on the Asiatic frontier. There they, as so many thousands of heart-broken despairing men and women had done before them, looked their last on Russian soil.

They were halted for the night in the clearing in which the Pillar stands, and when the grey light of the winter's morning broke over the snow-laden trees the men were formed up in line with the sleighs carrying the woman and children in the rear. When all was ready Mazanoff gave the word: "Forward!" the whips of the Cossacks cracked, and the mournful procession moved slowly onward into the vast, white, silent wilderness, out of which none save the guards were destined ever to emerge again.

EPILOGUE.

"And on Earth Peace!"

The winter and summer of 1905 passed in unbroken tranquility all over Europe and the English-speaking world. The nations, at last utterly sickened of bloodshed by the brief but awful experience of the last six months of 1904, earnestly and gladly accepted the new order of things. From first to last of the war the slaughter had averaged more than a million of fighting men a month, and fully five millions of non-combatants, men, women, and children, had fallen victims to famine and disease, or had been killed during the wholesale destruction of fortified towns by the war balloons of the League. At the lowest calculation the invasion of England had cost four million lives.

It was an awful butcher's bill, and when the peoples of Europe awoke from the delirium of war, to look back upon the frightful carnival of death and destruction, and to realise that all this desolation and ruin had come to pass in little more than seven months, so deep a horror of war and all its abominations possessed them that they hailed with delight the safeguards provided against it by the new European constitution which was made public at the end of March.

It was a singularly short and simple document considering the immense changes which it introduced. It contained only five clauses. Of these the first proclaimed the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon Federation in all matters of international policy, and set forth the penalties, to be incurred by any State that made war upon another.

The second constituted an International Board of Arbitration and Control, composed of all the Sovereigns of Europe and their Prime Ministers for the time being, with the new President of the United States, the Governor-General of Canada, and the President of the now federated Australasian Colonies. This Board was to meet in sections every year in the various capitals of Europe, and collectively every five years in London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, and New York in rotation. There was no appeal from its decision save to the Supreme Council of the Federation, and this appeal could only be made with the consent of the President of that Council, given after the facts of the matter in dispute had been laid before him in writing.

The third clause dealt with the rearrangement of the European frontiers. The Rhine from Karlsruhe to Basle was made the political as well as the natural boundary between France and Germany. The ancient kingdom of Poland was restored, with the frontiers it had possessed before the First Partition in 1773, and a descendant of Kosciusko, elected by the votes of the adult citizens of the reconstituted kingdom, was placed upon the throne. Turkey in Europe ceased to exist as a political Power. Constantinople was garrisoned by British and Federation troops, and the country was administered for the time being by a Provisional Government under the presidency of Lord Cromer, who was responsible only to the Supreme Council. The other States were left undisturbed.

The fourth and fifth clauses dealt with land, property, and law. All tenures of land existing before the war were cancelled at a stroke, and the soil of each country was declared to be the sole and inalienable property of the State. No occupiers were disturbed who were turning the land to profitable account, or who were making use of a reasonable area as a residential estate, but the great landowners in the country and the ground landlords in the towns ceased to exist as such, and all private incomes derived from the rent of the land were declared illegal and so forfeited.

All incomes unearned by productive work of hand or brain were subjected to a progressive tax, which reached fifty per cent. when the income amounted to £10,000 a year. It is almost needless to say that these clauses raised a tremendous outcry among the limited classes they affected; but the only reply made to it by the President of the Supreme Council was "that honestly earned incomes paid no tax, and

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that the idle and useless classes ought to be thankful to be permitted to exist at any price. The alternative of the tax would be compulsory labour paid for at its actual value by the State." Without one exception the grumblers preferred to pay the tax.

All rents, revised according to the actual value of the produce or property, were to be paid direct to the State. As long as he paid his rent-tax no man could be disturbed in the possession of his holding. If he did not pay it the non-payment was to be held as presumptive evidence that he was not making a proper use of it and he was to receive a year's notice to quit; but if at the end of that time he had amended his ways the notice was to be revoked.

In all countries the Civil and Criminal Codes of Law were to be amalgamated and simplified by a committee of judges appointed directly by the Parliament with the assent of the Sovereign.

The fifth clause of the Constitution plainly stated that no man was to be expected to obey a law that he could not understand, and that the Supreme Council would uphold no law which was so complicated that it needed a legal expert to explain it.

It is almost needless to say that this clause swept away at a blow that pernicious class of hired advocates who had for ages grown rich on the weakness and the dishonesty of their fellow-men. In after years it was found that the abolition of the professional lawyer had furthered the cause of peace and progress quite as efficiently as the prohibition of standing armies had done.

On the conclusion of the war the aerial fleet was increased to twenty-five vessels exclusive of the flagship. The number of war-balloons was raised to fifty, and three millions of Federation soldiers were held ready for active service until the conclusion of the war in the East between the Moslems and Buddhists. By November the Moslems were victors all along the line, and during the last week of that month the last battle between Christian and Moslem was fought on the southern shore of the Bosphorus.

All communications with the Asiatic and African shores of the Mediterranean were cut as soon as it became certain that Sultan Mohammed Reshad, at the head of a million and a half of victorious Moslems, and supported by Prince Abbas of Egypt at the head of seven hundred thousand more, was marching to the reconquest of Turkey. The most elaborate precautions were taken to prevent any detailed information as to the true state of things in Europe reaching the Sultan, as Tremayne and Arnold had come to the conclusion that it would be better, if he persisted in courting inevitable defeat, that it should fall upon him with crushing force and stupefying suddenness, so that he might be the more inclined to listen to reason afterwards.

The Mediterranean was patrolled from end to end by air-ships and dynamite cruisers, and aerial scouts marked every movement of the victorious Sultan until it became absolutely certain that his objective point was Scutari. Meanwhile, two millions of men had been concentrated between Galata and Constantinople, while another million occupied the northern shore of the Dardanelles. An immense force of warships and dynamite cruisers swarmed between Gallipoli and the Golden Horn. Twenty air-ships and forty-five war-balloons lay outside Constantinople, ready to take the air at a moment's notice.

The conqueror of Northern Africa and Southern Asia had only a very general idea as to what had really happened in Europe. His march of conquest had not been interrupted by any European expedition. The Moslems of India had exterminated the British garrisons, and there had been no attempt at retaliation or vengeance, as there had been in the days of the Mutiny. England, he knew, had been invaded, but according to the reports which had reached him, none of the invaders had ever got out of the island alive, and then the English had come out and conquered Europe. Of the wonderful doings of the aerial fleets only the vaguest rumours had come to his ears, and these had been so exaggerated and distorted, that he had but a very confused idea of the real state of affairs.

The Moslem Forces were permitted to advance without the slightest molestation to Scutari and Lamsaki, and on the evening of the 28th of November the Sultan took up his quarters in Scutari. That night he received a letter from the President of the Federation, setting forth succinctly and yet very clearly, what had actually taken place in Europe, and calling upon him to give his allegiance to the Supreme Council, as the other sovereigns had done, and to accept the over-lordship of Northern Africa and Southern Asia in exchange for Turkey in Europe. The letter concluded by saying that the immediate result of refusal to accept these terms would be the destruction of the Moslem armies on the following day. Before midnight, Tremayne received the Sultan's reply. It ran thus:

"In the name of the Most Merciful God.

"From MOHAMMED RESHAD, Commander of the Faithful, to ALAN TREMAYNE, Leader of the English.

"I have come to retake the throne of my fathers, and I am not to be turned back by vain and boastful threats. What I have won with the sword I will keep with the sword, and I will own allegiance to none save God and His holy Prophet who have given me the victory. Give me back Stamboul and my ancient dominions, and we will divide the world between us. If not, we must fight. Let the reply to this come before daybreak. "MOHAMMED."

No reply came back; but during the night the dynamite cruisers were drawn up within half a mile of the Asiatic shore with their guns pointing southward over Scutari, while other warships patrolled the coast to detect and frustrate any attempt to transport guns or troops across the narrow strip of water. With the first glimmer of light the two aerial fleets took the air, the war-balloons in a long line over the van of the Moslem army, and the air-ships spread out in a semicircle to the southward. The hour of prayer was allowed to pass in peace, and then the work of death began.

The war-balloons moved slowly forward in a straight line at an elevation of four thousand feet, sweeping the Moslem host from van to rear with a ceaseless hail of melinite and cyanogen bombs. Great projectiles soared silently up from the water to the north, and where they fell buildings were torn to fragments, great holes were blasted into the earth, and every human being within the radius of the explosion was blown to pieces, or hurled stunned to the ground. But more mysterious and terrible than all were the effects of the assault delivered by the air-ships, which, divided into squadrons, swept hither and thither in wide curves, with the sunlight shining on their silvery hulls and their long slender guns, smokeless and flameless, hurling the most awful missiles of all far and wide, over a scene of butchery and horror that beggared all description.

In vain the gallant Moslems looked for enemies in the flesh to confront them. None appeared save a few sentinel's across the Bosphorous. And still the work of slaughter went on, pitiless and passionless as the earthquake or the thunderstorm. Millions of shots were fired into the air without result, and by the time the rain of death had been falling without intermission for two hours, an irresistible panic fell upon the Moslem soldiery. They had never met enemies like these before, and, brave as lions and yet simple as children, they looked upon them as something more than human, and with one accord they flung away their weapons and raised their hands in supplication to the sky. Instantly the aerial bombardment ceased, and within an hour East and West had shaken hands, Sultan Mohammed had accepted the terms of the Federation, and the long warfare of Cross and Crescent had ceased, as men hoped, for ever

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Then the proclamation was issued, disbanding the armies of Britain and the Federation and the forces of the Sultan. The warships steamed away westward on their last voyage to the South Atlantic, beneath whose waves they were soon to sink with all their guns and armaments for ever. The war-balloons were to be kept for purposes of transportation of heavy articles to Aeria, while the fleet of air-ships was to remain the sole effective fighting force in the world.

While these events were taking place in Europe, those who had been banished as outcasts from the society of civilised men by the terrible justice of Natas had been plodding their weary way, in the tracks of the thousands they had themselves sent to a living grave, along the Great Siberian Road to the hideous wilderness, in the midst of which lie the mines of Kara. From the Pillar of Farewells to Tiumen, from thence to Tomsk—where they met the first of the released political exiles returning in a joyous band to their beloved Russia—and thence to Irkutsk, and then over the ice of Lake Baikal, and through the awful frozen desert of the Trans-Baikal Provinces, they had been driven like cattle, until the remnant that had survived the horrors of the awful journey reached the desolate valley of the Kara and were finally halted at the Lower Diggings.

Of nearly three hundred strong and well fed-men who had said good-bye to liberty at the Pillar of Farewells, only a hundred and twenty pallid and emaciated wretches stood shivering in their rags and chains when the muster was called on the morning after their arrival at Kara. Mazanoff and his escort had carried out their part of the sentence of Natas to the letter. The arctic blasts from the Tum-dras, the forced march, the chain and the scourge had done their work, and more than half the exiled convicts had found in nameless graves along the road, respite from the long horrors of the fate which awaited the survivors.

The first name called in the last muster was Alexander Romanoff. "Here," came in a deep hollow tone from the gaunt and ragged wreck of the giant who twelve months before had been the stateliest figure in the brilliant galaxy of European Royalty.

"Your sentence is hard labour in the mines for——" The last word was never spoken, for ere it was uttered the tall and still erect form of the dethroned Autocrat suddenly shrank together, lurched forward, and fell with a choking gasp and a clash of chains upon the hard-trampled snow. A stream of blood rushed from his white, half-open lips, and when they went to raise him he was dead.

If ever son of woman died of a broken heart it was Alexander Romanoff, last of the tyrants of Russia. Never had the avenging hand of Nemesis, though long delayed, fallen with more precise and terrible justice. On the very spot on which thousands of his subjects and fellow-creatures, innocent of all crime save a desire for progress, had worn out their lives in torturing toil to provide the gold that had gilded his luxury, he fell as the Idol fell of old in the temple of Dagon.

He had seen the blasting of his highest hopes in the hour of their apparent fruition. He had beheld the destruction of his army and the ruin of his dynasty. He had seen kindred and friends and faithful servants sink under the nameless horrors of a fate he could do nothing to alleviate, and with the knowledge that nothing but death could release them from it, and now at the last moment death had snatched from him even the poor consolation of sharing the sufferings of those nearest and dearest to him on earth.

This happened on the 1st of December, 1905, at nine o'clock in the morning. At the same hour Arnold leapt the *Ithuriel* over the Ridge, passed down the Valley of Aeria like a flash of silver light, and dropped to earth on the shores of the lake. In the same grove of palms which had witnessed their despairing betrothal he found Natasha swinging in a hammock, with a black-eyed, six-weeks-old baby nestling in her bosom, and her own loveliness softened and etherealised by the sacred grace of motherhood.

"Welcome, my lord!" she said, with a bright flush of pleasure and the sweetest smile even he had ever seen transfiguring her beauty, and stretching out her hand in greeting as he approached, "Does the King come in peace?"

"Yes, Angel mine! the Empire that you asked for is yours. There is not a regiment of men under arms in all the civilised world. The last battle has been fought and won, and so there is peace on earth at last!"

The End.

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A Pamphlet that is Creating a Sensation.

Price Sixpence. ***At all Newsagents.***

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"An excellent idea. My own private idea is that the future of musketry in action lies in the direction of high-angle dropping fire, against which trenches and parapets are useless. I have been endeavouring to perfect a means for making this reasonably accurate, and I think that I have succeeded. Wishing you well in your attempt to drive your point home."

Sir Charles Dilke says:

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The *St. James's Gazette* says:

"We have received a brilliant pamphlet embodying a "Conversation in Hades," written by Mr. Frank Harris, which is published this morning. We are far from endorsing all the opinions expressed in these pages: indeed, with many of them we are very obviously at variance. But in spite of that, we believe they contain the right answer to a question which has hitherto been asked in vain by every Englishman."

HOW TO BEAT THE BOERS.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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Zox Cures Influenza

ZOX is the discovery of a London Chemist, who found it of a remarkable benefit for Influenza patients. It is free from injurious substance, as certified by Dr. A. B. Griffiths, F.R.S.E. 1/- box of ZOX Powders, and 1/1½ bottle of ZOX Tonic is Guaranteed to cure any ordinary case of Influenza Hundreds of grateful letters. ZOX CO., 11 Hatton Garden, London, E.C.

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I was for years; by chance I came across a simple home remedy that reduced me from 17st. to 10st. 12lbs., and I will willingly send particulars free to any sufferer enclosing stamp. Mrs. L. E. FELL, 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

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IN PATENT AIR-TIGHT TINS.

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MORCHARD BISHOP, DEVON.

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Send me an envelope (stamped and addressed) and I will tell you how to remove all superfluous hair free of charge. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Miss E. V. (Room 3), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

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Every man suffering from Varicocele and the allied troubles, should send for treatise, describing their Causes, Symptoms, Results, and Successful and Painless Treatment without surgical operation or the use of cumbersome trusses and electrical appliances. Will be sent sealed, post free, three stamps.

S. S. MURRAY,

7 Southampton Row, London, W.C.

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CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 8), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

A SUM of from 12s. to 25s. per week

can be earned in spare hours or evenings by either sex everywhere.—Send addressed envelope for particulars to Box 24, Eclipse Works, 89 Aldersgate Street, E.C.

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A MINISTER WRITES:

"The box of Powders you sent me for Indigestion has done me so much good that I shall feel obliged by your sending me another box." February 9th, 1900.

The Prescription of a well-known Medical Man, prepared by fully qualified Chemists.

Send stamps or P.O. for 1s. 1½d. for sample 12 packets to

D. JAMIESON TOWER CHAMBERS, LIVERPOOL.

HOLLOWAY'S PILLS & OINTMENT.

PRE-EMINENT FOR 60 YEARS.

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SAFE REMEDY CURES

HEADACHE and NEURALGIA

IMMEDIATELY,

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To ANYONE HAVING THE LEAST DIFFICULTY, it will be sent post free for 12 Stamps by "KAPUTINE Ltd.," Huddersfield; or, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, A. M. Kaputine, Huddersfield, you will receive a free sample.

The fact that "KAPUTINE" is recommended by many leading Medical Men, and is used in National Hospitals and Infirmaries proves that it is THE, THE recognised SAFE REMEDY FOR HEADACHES.

Refuse Substitutes and demand "KAPUTINE," the Safe Remedy. There is no substitute "LIKE IT"; nothing "AS GOOD"; nothing "SIMILAR."

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The Brain Gymnasium.

On this page, under the title, "The Brain Gymnasium," appear each week a series of puzzles calculated to occupy the attention of the competitors with interest and profit to themselves, during the long winter evenings. Many of the tasks set are comparatively easy of solution, while others are designed with a view to taxing the abilities of the most proficient in this direction.

In these competitions a prize of £2 will be awarded each week to the sender of the greatest number of correct solutions, and to the senders of the ten next highest number of correct ones will be presented either one of our silver-plated pencil cases or a copy of a popular six-shilling novel. Write all your solutions on one sheet of paper, putting the number against each. Post the batch in an envelope marked "Brain Gymnasium," to reach the Editor, Short Stories, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C., by Monday, March 12th, 1900.

No. 52.

Divide 101 into three parts so that the first and second parts added together make the third, and the second and third parts added make the first.

No. 53.

Take words signifying "to put together," "a moiety," "to baffle," and "assistance," and with the letters contained in them form five other words, which, read backwards, will give the names of two familiar flowers.

No. 54.

Form one word from two words signifying "a dance," and "suitable," and then behead it four times so that complete words of the following parts of speech are left: a verb, an adjective, an adverb, and a verb.

No. 55.

I am something of which every reader of *Short Stories* is fond. Divide me into two, and it is sometimes necessary to make my first, in order to obtain my whole. There can be no doubt about my second. What am I? Trying to solve this puzzle will perhaps give you the correct answer.

No. 56.

A C E G I M N N.

From the above letters select three which will form a word, and then, adding one of the remaining letters each time, form five other words.

No. 57.

Replace the following with words, the initials of which will form the name of a well-known statesman:

A regiment in the British Army.
A quadruped much in use in South Africa.
Weapons of war.
A reserve of the Army.
A body of troops.
The standard of a regiment.
A list of soldiers.
An officer in the Army.
Great guns.
Foot soldiers.
One of the divisions of Africa.

RESULT OF BRAIN GYMNASIUM.

Nos. 28 to 33.

In this competition twenty-two competitors were absolutely correct. We have added to the prizes offered (viz., £2 and ten silver plated pencil-cases) and are forwarding to each of the following a postal order for two shillings, together with one of the pencil-cases.

John Boyd, 32 Stevenson Drive, Langside, Glasgow.
D. Ryan, jun., 16 Crow Street, Dublin.
J. H. Cockerill, 17 Essex Street, Kingsland Road, N.
N. Parley, 6 Station Road, Harlesden, N.W.
C. Jupp, 84 Wellesley Road, Croydon.
Miss S. Kemp, 103 Braybrooke Road, Hastings.
G. Lewey, Limehouse Basin, West India Dock, E.
A. W. Chapman, 128 Effra Road, Wimbledon.
W. C. Lee, 160 Shaw Heath, Stockport.
James McCormick, 90 Talbot Street, Dublin.
Miss F. G. Pearson, 8 Cecil Avenue, Horton, Bradford.
M. Carpenter, 4 Greencroft Gardens, South Hampstead.
James Thain, Longfellow House, 29A Palmerston Road, Bowes Park, N.
W. Henderson, 26 Princes Street, Perth.
T. F. Moore, 11 Lorne Street, Fairfield, Liverpool.
W. Gyde, The Barracks, Warley.
J. M. Child, 46 Wilson Street, Derby.
H. B. Thompson, Bracknell, Berks.
E. Hutchings, 4 Kingsgate Street, High Holborn.
C. H. Poynter, 22 Exmoor Road, Southampton.
James White, 11 Tobin Street, Liverpool.
M. W. Daws, 21 Parliament Street, Hull.

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLES

Appearing in No. 580, February 10th, 1900.

No. 34.
NIGH
IDLE
GLUE
HEED

No. 35. Medway.

No. 36.
1. Learning is better than houses, lands, or money.
2. So long as you are ignorant, be not ashamed to learn.
3. Idleness is the parent of vice and misery.
4. A good word for a bad word is worth much, and costs little.
5. Oil and truth will get uppermost at last.
6. A good name will shine for ever.
7. A bad wound heals; a bad name kills.
8. Better to be alone than in bad company.
9. Doing nothing is doing ill.
10. Say well is good, but do well is better.

No. 37. HOTTENTOT.
No. 38. SANDFORD and MERTON.
No. 39. ASPIRATES.

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Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on Tuesday, March **6th**, if intended for the issue on sale March **20th**, and dated March **24th**. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

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LAST GRAND
PRIZE-WINNERS' COMPETITION.

Open to all Prize-Winners taking up their Machines in this Competition.

£100 Motor Car
£100 Sailing Yacht
£100 Grand Piano
£100 Musical Clock

£100 Horse and Carriage
£100 Electric Launch
£100 Freehold Plot, or
£100 in Cash or Bank Notes

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£50 Musical Box
£50 Gold Chronometer
£50 Writing Desk
£50 Dressing Case
£50 Pony and Trap

£50 Rowing Boat
£50 Business
£50 Furniture
£50 Trichord Piano
£50 Plot of Land
£50 Holiday Tour

£50 Ventriloquist's Figures
£50 Greenhouse
£50 Shop
£50 Wagonette
£50 Gas Engine, or
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£25 Marble Statue
£25 Gold Watch
£25 Electro-Ware
£25 American Organ
£25 Set of Cutlery
£25 Rifle and Outfit

£25 Pony and Harness
£25 Doll's House
£25 Secretaire
£25 Dog Cart
£25 Dressing Case
£25 Oil Painting

£25 Lady's Fur Coat
£25 Brass Bedstead
£25 Electric Light Apparatus
£25 Silver Candelabra
£25 Dresden China

£25 Garden Implements
£25 Bath and Geyser
£25 Scarf Pin
£25 Cottage Piano
£25 Engagement Ring, or,
£25 in Bank Notes.

£15 Cycle
£15 Mahogany Sideboard
£15 Fur Overcoat
£15 Lawn Tennis Set
£15 Gold Chain
£15 Cornet and Music
£15 Summer House
£15 Canadian Canoe

£15 Ivory and Ebony Chess
£15 Fishing Tackle
£15 Drawing-Room Clock
£15 Tea Service
£15 Box of Tools
£15 Silver Cigar Cabinet
£15 Proof Engraving
£15 Golf Set

£15 Cricket Set
£15 Violin and Music
£15 Mandoline and Music
£15 Harmonium
£15 Kitchen Utensils
£15 River Punt
£15 Model Steam Yacht
£15 Typewriter

£15 Saddlebag Chair
£15 Library of New Books
£15 Phonograph
£15 House Telephone
£15 Model Engine
£15 Conjuring Tricks
£15 Marquee Tent
£15 Fireproof Safe, or
£15 Cash or Bank Notes.

The above is only a PARTIAL LIST of the Free Prizes now offered. We have now awarded considerably over £8,200 Value in Prizes. Full particulars of Prizes, Competitions, &c., will be sent to each one entitled to compete.

RESULT OF COMPETITION JUST CLOSED.

£100 in Cash.—WILLIAM SILL, 12 Winstanley Place, Bouston, near Kendal, Westmoreland.

£30 in Cash.—VALENTINE GAMBRILL, Monks Horton, Kent.

£15 in Cash.—OWEN OWENS, Maldwyn Stores, Llandegfan, Menai Bridge.

£10 in Cash.—H. L'ESTRANGE BURGESS, Bayham House, Sevenoaks.

40 Persons have Won **£23** *Cycles Free of all Cost.* **There were over 90 more Cash Prizes than there were Competitors.**

In this, the last Free Prize Competition that will be promoted, it is a matter of utter impossibility for any competitor not to receive an award without having to pay anything at all save the two penny stamps enclosed for postage. The only instance where any payment is made to us, is when a competitor has been successful in gaining a Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, or Consolation Prize, in one of our ordinary competitions. A nominal sum has then to be paid according to this advertisement for a Cycle which 18 of the World's Greatest Critics, 12 Cycling Papers, 249 Newspapers, and 5,845 Riders have pronounced, and pronounced emphatically, to be well worth £15 cash in the ordinary market. We send you absolute proof of all these statements when forwarding results of competition. We have never received an adverse Press notice, or heard of a Prize-winner being dissatisfied after taking up his or her machine. All Prize Machines (which are exactly the same as those which cost £15, £16, £17, £18, or £19 in the ordinary way) are sent out strictly on approval; and the full amount paid us, together with carriage, is willingly refunded if the cycles are not fully worth, not merely what is paid for them, but our usual selling price.

WHAT TO DO.—SEND IN REPLIES EARLY.—Make up the best sentence you can out of seven words, each word commencing with a letter of T A W W T A P in proper order. Thus, for example, "They Are Well Worth The Advertised Price." This is an extract from a notice in the *Athletic Record* (now *Pastimes*) September 3rd, 1898. Enclose two penny stamps for postage of result of competition, with Catalogue, Testimonials, etc.

FIRST PRIZE: £23 A.B. SAFETY.

SECOND CLASS (9 Prizes), Similar Cycle for - - £9
THIRD CLASS (12 Prizes), Similar Cycle for - £10
FOURTH CLASS (15 Prizes), Similar Cycle for - £11
FIFTH CLASS (18 Prizes), Similar Cycle for - £12
SIXTH CLASS (20 Prizes), Similar Cycle for - £13
CONSOLATION (25 Prizes), Similar Cycle for - £14

TAKE PARTICULAR NOTICE.—Competition is NOW OPEN, and CLOSES on THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 1900.

Enclose two penny stamps for postage of Result of Competition. As so few are able to call and inspect the machines, **we guarantee to refund the full amount paid for any prize if the owner is not perfectly satisfied** with it on arrival. We desire it to be distinctly understood that we reserve to ourselves the right of increasing the number of prizes in the competition set in this paper. Results will be declared as soon as possible. Prizes unclaimed in a week or ten days are forfeited.

£100 If you can purchase our cheapest machine, brand new, from us, or any agent, dealer, shipper, or factor can buy one for less than FIFTEEN SOVEREIGNS, we will promptly hand you a £100 BANK OF ENGLAND NOTE.

84 COMPETITORS WERE DISQUALIFIED LAST TIME BY BEING TOO LATE.

SEND YOUR REPLY IMMEDIATELY TO THE MANAGING DIRECTOR, MARKING YOUR ENVELOPE, "SHORT STORIES."

A.B. CYCLE CO. LTD., 59, 60, 67, 68, & 69, CHANCERY LANE, HOLBORN, W.C.

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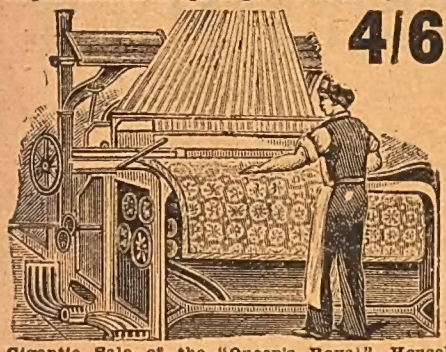

4/6

To Readers of "Short Stories," 3/3/1900, on receipt of Postal Order or Stamps, value 4/6 (Regd.), we will send you the **Largest Genuine Reversible Carpet in Brussels Finish, with Rug,** ever sold at the price, direct from the Looms to any address, on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing room, dining room, bedroom, &c., bordered and woven in Brussels patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember, these are woven, and are made of a material almost equal to Wool. **Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.**

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Size.	Each.		Size.	Each
6ft. by 6ft.	2/11	REDUCED	10½ft. by 12ft.	11/6
6ft. by 7½ft.	3/11	SALE	9ft. by 15ft.	12/6
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7½ft. by 9ft.	5/11		12ft. by 13½ft.	14/6
9ft. by 9ft.	7/6		12ft. by 15ft.	15/9
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When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, & any particular colour preferred

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6ft. by 9ft.	7/6	9ft. by 15ft.	19/6
9ft. by 9ft.	9/0	12ft. by 12ft.	21/0
6ft. by 12ft.	10/6	12ft. by 13½ft.	22/0
9ft. by 9ft.	11/0	12ft. by 15ft.	25/6
9ft. by 10½ft.	13/6	12ft. by 18ft.	30/0
9ft. by 12ft.	15/0	12ft. by 21ft.	35/6

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A "Queen's Royal" Hearthrug, to match, size 6ft. by 3ft., price **2/-.**
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REAL BRUSSELS CARPETS.

Extraordinarily Heavy, very Best Quality, Newest and Choice Designs. In Old Gold, Sultan, Terra Cotta, Crimson, Sky, Navy, and the latest colours. With handsome Border to correspond. Guaranteed to wear for years, and to give every satisfaction.
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9ft. by 10½ft.	33/-	12ft. by 18ft.	77/-

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BEECHAM'S PILLS

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BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS,
Sick Headache, Constipation, Wind and Pains in Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver, and Female Ailments.

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